

Lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario and Superior contain more than 90 percent of North America's fresh surface water. Combined, they supply drinking water to more than 35 million people. What's more, millions of people benefit from the commerce and business that depend on the waters of the Great Lakes. The Lakes are not only a prized natural resource, but also a significant economic engine for New York and the United States.

Rep. Slaughter is a co-chair of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, a bipartisan working group within the Northeast-Midwest Congressional and Senate Coalitions. Members of the Great Lakes Task Force cooperate to restore the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes.

Rep. Slaughter has been a tireless advocate for the Great Lakes. Over the last several years, Rep. Slaughter has been focused on three major issues that have a profound impact on the Great Lakes and the surrounding communities. The threat of Asian Carp as well as the threats posed by the discharge of ballast water have profound impacts on the environmental health of the Great Lakes. In addition to working to address these issues, Rep. Slaughter has been an advocate for improving port maintenance, and revitalizing the shipping industry on the Great Lakes.

Asian Carp

Rep. Slaughter is an original cosponsor of H.R. 892, the Stop Asian Carp Act. This legislation requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create an action plan to permanently separate Lake Michigan from the Chicago Area Waterway System, where experts believe Asian Carp could enter and cause irreparable harm to the Great Lakes. Creation of the plan must begin within 30 days of the bill's enactment, and the Army Corps must send a progress report to Congress and the President within six months and again in 12 months. The full plan must be completed and given to Congress and the President 18 months after the bill is enacted. It will be monitored by the Council on Environmental Quality to ensure its thorough and timely completion.

On February 3, 2011, Rep. Slaughter was the lead author of a letter signed by 23 Members of Congress and 6 Senators from the Great Lakes Task Force. The letter was addressed to Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, requesting that the Army Corps of Engineers utilize findings from a Great Lakes Commission study on ecological separation to accelerate their own study on ecological separation known as the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS).

On June 29, 2010, Rep. Slaughter joined 27 of Members of Congress in writing a letter to President Obama urging the immediate strengthening of the barrier meant to keep the invasive species out of the Great Lakes and urging for the pursuit of an aggressive strategy for permanent hydrologic separation between the Great Lakes and the waterways linked to the Mississippi River, where Asian carp have taken over in recent decades.

Additionally, on December 17, 2009 Rep. Slaughter joined 49 of my colleagues in writing a letter to four federal agencies urging they take immediate steps to protect the Great Lakes and from Asian carp including (1) closing the O'Brien and Chicago Locks if there is reasonable likelihood that Asian carp are above the electric barrier; (2) continuing the use of piscicides as a rapid response measure; (3) creating a permanent hydrologic separation between the Great Lakes and the canal; (4) increasing the voltage of the electric dispersal barrier to prevent Asian carp of any size from crossing the barrier; and (5) implementing the recommendations of the Asian Carp Rapid Response Project.

Ballast Water

Ballast water is a serious matter with far reaching implications for this nation. Each minute, 40,000 gallons of ballast water containing thousands of foreign bacteria, viruses, animals and plants, are discharged into U.S. waters. That's 21 billion gallons of ballast water annually. Once introduced, invasive species are exceedingly difficult to control, and often impossible to eradicate. The U.S. spends billions of dollars every year trying to contain and eradicate invasive species and the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force, an interagency committee established by the Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990, estimates that 15 recent introductions of invasive species could cost the U.S. \$134 billion alone by 2050.

Under current law, the EPA and the Coast Guard are responsible for issuing federal guidelines for the discharge of ballast water. The EPA is set to release new requirements by the end of the month while the Coast Guard is in the final stages of establishing national discharge regulations. However, these standards do not preempt the right of the states to impose additional standards in light of increased threats, and act as a floor for regulatory efforts, not a ceiling.

In Congress, Rep. Slaughter strongly supports removing Title VII from H.R. 2838, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2011. Title VII would establish a nationwide Ballast Water Discharge standard that preempts the authority of States to provide additional ballast water discharge regulations under the Clean Water Act.

On November 4, 2011, during consideration of H.R. 2838, Rep. Slaughter introduced an amendment, along with Representative John Dingell of Michigan, to strike Title VII from H.R. 2838. Unfortunately, this amendment failed 161 to 237. However it did receive bi-partisan support and sent a clear message to the rest of Congress that this issue is too important to include in a non-controversial measure such as the reauthorization of the Coast Guard.

In addition, Rep. Slaughter recently sent a letter to the United States Coast Guard asking that it issue its proposed Ballast Water Discharge Standards (BWDS) for the Great Lakes as soon as possible. These regulations were originally scheduled to be published in December of 2010. The Coast Guard needs to finalize and issue BWDS as soon as possible to reduce uncertainty among commercial stakeholders and put in place lasting protections for our nation's valuable waterways.

Dredging & Short Sea Shipping

In 1985, Congress created the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT), a 0.125 percent tax assessed on the value of imported and domestic cargo handled at ports to help pay the dredging and maintenance costs for our nation's federally maintained ports. The HMT has been extremely

effective in raising revenue, but has not been adequately spent on maintaining our nation's ports. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the HMT will raise over \$1.3 billion in revenues in 2011, yet only \$790 million will be spent on dredging and maintenance functions this year. The remaining funds will be deposited in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), which currently has a balance of \$6.4 billion and is expected to grow to over \$20 billion by 2021 based on current projections.

Rep. Slaughter is very concerned with the growing disparity between receipts and expenditures from the HMT. This revenue is vitally important to keeping our ports open and retaining the jobs and industry that rely on these vital hubs of commerce. Our nation's ports and harbors are currently suffering from a severe lack of maintenance, threatening the economic livelihoods of the communities that depend on them at a time when our economy is struggling to rebound.

To address this issue, Rep. Slaughter has cosponsored H.R. 104, The RAMP Act. This legislation would require that all revenue received from the HMT be spent just how Congress intended it to be; on dredging and operations and maintenance for federally maintained harbors. This legislation is cost neutral and enjoys broad bipartisan support among members.

Additionally, in November of last year, Rep. Slaughter was the lead author on a letter signed by 20 Members of Congress. The letter was addressed to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee urging the committee to mark up and pass the RAMP Act so that it could be brought to the House floor for final passage. The bi-partisan letter featured 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats equally committed to seeing this legislation enacted into law.

Rep. Slaughter is also committed to revitalizing shipping on the Great Lakes in order to encourage job creation and economic growth in the region. She is a cosponsor of H.R. 1533, the Short Sea Shipping Act of 2011. This legislation would exempt non-bulk commercial cargo that is loaded at a port in the U.S. and unloaded at another port in the U.S. from the Harbor Maintenance Tax. Exemption of this tax would encourage more domestic shipping, help remove more cargo off of our nation's congested highways, and reduce air pollution generated by trucking and rail transportation.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

In addition to the issues above, Rep. Slaughter supports the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). GLRI is an interagency effort to target the most significant problems in the Great Lakes region, including invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution, and contaminated sediment. GLRI is using outcome-oriented performance goals and measures to target the most significant problems and track progress in addressing them. Through GLRI, EPA and other Federal agencies will coordinate State, tribal, local, and industry to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the Great Lakes. Rep. Slaughter has spoken out in favor of fully funding GLRI at \$300 million in fiscal year 2012, and similar levels in future years, adding up to billions of dollars of investment in the Great Lakes over the life of the program.