

Funding Increases for High-Speed Rail, Fighting Asian Carp

But Tragic Cuts for Low Income Heating and Community Development Block Grant Programs

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today reacted to the five year budget proposal released by President Obama saying that it would cut funding to programs that have great value to the residents of Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester.

“I agree with the President that we need to reduce spending and make targeted investments in the future, but many of these cuts I see as inappropriate. There’s no need to go after working class families trying to heat their homes in one of the coldest winters on record. And it’s not necessary to slash funding to programs that allow economic development in our Upstate cities. These cuts are unjust and I know they will hurt my constituents,” said Slaughter.

“We should not be looking to cut the small investments that will move this country forward, but rather target significant expenditures such as the wars. Right now we’re spending \$2 billion a week on the war in Afghanistan, that’s roughly \$8 billion every month and that’s in addition to our ongoing costs in Iraq. Eliminating our spending on foreign wars alone would go a long way to cutting our deficit in half.

“At the same time I’m delighted to see increased funding to combat the threat of Asian Carp in the Great Lakes and to build a national high-speed rail network which will certainly include Upstate New York.”

Also in Washington this week, House Republicans have released their blueprint for another spending document, the Continuing Resolution which is far more controversial than the budget

released by the President today. The Continuing Resolution would fund the federal government between March 5 and September 31 of this year. This afternoon, the Continuing Resolution will have a hearing in the Rules Committee of which Slaughter is the Ranking Member.

Below is a breakdown of the programs in the President's Budget that will directly impact Western New York businesses and families.

Funding Low Income Heating Assistance Program

The President's 2012 Budget provides \$2.57 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help low-income families offset a portion of their home heating and cooling costs. That's a decrease of \$2,530 billion from FY 2010.

In 2009, Erie County provided this necessary funding to 81,450 beneficiaries. In Niagara County, 15,241 households benefited with another 2,719 households in Orleans County and 39,671 households in Monroe County receiving this vital funding.

Funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD.

In Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester, it helps low income homeowners with needed home repairs and helps them retrofit their homes to save energy and ultimately reduce their home heating and cooling costs.

Under the President's proposed budget, CDBG funding would be reduced by \$300 million or 7.5 percent.

Funding to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership helps U.S. manufacturers identify growth and innovation strategies and adopt more efficient manufacturing processes. In combination with advanced manufacturing support from NIST, the Budget will improve U.S. manufacturers' ability to compete globally. President Obama's budget increases funding for this program up to \$142 million up from \$125 million in FY 2010.

Funding for High-Speed Rail

Last week Vice President Biden and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that high-speed rail would receive an astounding \$53.6 billion over the next 6 years to build a national intercity passenger rail network. The announcement continues the Administration's commitment expressed in the President's State of the Union address where he announced, "Within 25 years, our goal is to give 80 percent of Americans access to high speed rail." Slaughter commented on the increase in rail funding last week saying

"I couldn't be more pleased by the news because it makes clear our commitment to a 21st century rail system that will spark commerce, create jobs and trigger revitalization in our region for years to come."

Her comments are available [here](#).

Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is an interagency initiative which will target the most significant problems in the region, including invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution, and contaminated sediment.

Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has decreased from last year's budget from \$475 million to \$350 million.

Funding to Fight Asian Carp

Within the \$350 million request, the Fish and Wildlife Service will, for the first time, receive \$2.9 million to combat Asian Carp in the Great Lakes while the U.S. Geological Survey will receive \$3.5 million to develop new Asian Carp control science.

More on Slaughter's work to protect the Great Lakes from this invasive species is available [here](#).