

### Joins Colleagues to Request Coast Guard Publish Standards to Protect Great Lakes

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today advocated against a provision of the Coast Guard Authorization bill that would fail to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species caused by ballast water discharge.

In opposing the provision, Slaughter said, "I strongly support reauthorizing our Nation's Coast Guard but oppose final passage of H.R. 2838 due to the controversial ballast water discharge provisions that were included in the bill.

"Nationally more than 4,500 invasive species have been introduced. In total they cost billions of dollars on an annual basis. \$5 billion alone has been spent to try and deal with the European zebra mussel which we have made barely any inroads against. It was introduced in the Great Lakes and can be found by the thousands throughout the lakes. They attach to the hard surfaces so thickly that they clog the municipal water systems and electric generation plants costing over \$1 billion a year to control.

"Title VII of HR 2838 would set weak national standards for the regulation of ballast water discharge and would prevent states like New York from taking appropriate action to protect our waterways. I will refuse to compromise my efforts to protect the Great Lakes and the economies that rely on these waterways."

Earlier this week, Slaughter joined co-chairs of the Great Lakes Task Force, Rep. John Dingell (MI-15), Rep. Candice Miller (MI-10) and Rep. Sean Duffy (WI-7), and [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.

In part, the letter read, "As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, we respectfully urge the Coast Guard to finalize and issue its proposed Ballast Water Discharge Standards (BWDS) as soon as possible to reduce uncertainty among commercial stakeholders and put in place lasting protections for our nation's valuable waterways. "

Click here to view the full letter. The text is included below.

November 14, 2011

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr.

Commandant

United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street SW

Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Papp,

As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, we respectfully urge the Coast Guard to finalize and issue its proposed ballast water treatment standards for commercial vessels as soon as possible to reduce uncertainty among commercial stakeholders and put in place lasting protections for our nation's valuable waterways.

As you know, this issue has been of paramount concern to Members of Congress as well as the constituents who make up their water bordering districts. Ballast water has been identified as a common mechanism for the transfer of harmful invasive species that threaten the livelihood and recreation of the millions of residents who depend on them annually.

We understand that during your notice of proposed rulemaking, you received a larger than average volume of public comments and we appreciate and applaud your diligent work in responding to the concerns of the American people. However, we believe that these national standards are long overdue. Issuing these standards now would not only serve the best interests of the American people and the fragile ecosystems that surround us, but would help unify the national voice of regulators who have a stake in this critical issue.

Again, we thank you for your hard work and attention to this issue and look forward to working together to ensure that our current regulatory framework for ballast water management best meets the needs of our nation and its environment.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Candice S. Miller

John D. Dingell

Sean P. Duffy