

October 14, 2008 - Chairwoman Slaughter Applauds Results of Community LOOW Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chairwoman Slaughter Applauds Results of Community LOOW Project

Slaughter Secured Half the Funds Needed for the Project

Niagara Falls, NY - Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28) today applauded the results of the Community LOOW Project, an initiative led by the Niagara County Department of Health to ensure that the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) site is properly investigated and remediated to safeguard the public and environment. The Niagara County Department of Health has been working to create the project for two years and unveiled the final report today.

The LOOW site originated as 7,500 acres purchased by the federal government in 1942 to support World War II and subsequent defense operations. Today, a federal radioactive storage site, commercial landfills, and defense properties are situated within the former LOOW boundary.

"This site is located less than three miles from Lake Ontario, barely two miles from the Niagara River, and surrounded by neighborhoods," said Chairwoman Slaughter. "Like, those in this community who live a stones throw from the site, or work or send their kids to school in the area, I have serious concerns about the environmental and health risks this contaminated site poses."

Since 1944, numerous investigations, cleanups, and monitoring by various agency programs have been conducted on portions of the LOOW. Since numerous property owners, local, state, and federal government agencies are responsible for monitoring and remediating various portions of the site, the local community held concerns that responsibilities would "fall through the cracks." To alleviate this concern, the Niagara County Department of Health created the Community LOOW Project to provide an overarching review of the site.

In FY 2006, Chairwoman Slaughter secured \$100,000, half of the total funds needed, for the Community LOOW Project.

"The Community LOOW Project is an important new tool now at our disposal that allows us to uncover aspects of the LOOW site that require further attention. By cataloging all this data, this tool will also make our future site work more efficient and avoid costly and time consuming duplication" Slaughter continued. "I am proud that I was able to secure the funding that has allowed us to move forward with the effort to safely address this site once and for all."

BACKGROUND

The goals of the Community LOOW project are as follows:

- To identify and compile relevant data from past LOOW historic activity, investigations and clean-ups into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database.
- To perform a "Gap Analysis" of the LOOW data, and involve independent expert review of the work.
- To identify and recommend solutions to the lead agencies, which are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYS Department of Health.

A GIS database is an important analytical tool to promote information sharing between various regulatory agencies. The database can help to identify potential gaps or duplications in LOOW investigations.

The Community LOOW Project will help us ensure that future investigations and remediation work will be done efficiently

and help us identify aspects of the site that need further study in order to safeguard the public's health.

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