

April 20, 2007 - Slaughter Secures Congressional Approval for Local Water Projects

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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House Passes Water Resources Development Act with Broad Bipartisan Support

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"The passage of this legislation is a victory for all of Western New York, and I am very pleased that these critical projects for our communities were able to be included in the bill," said Rep. Slaughter. "From urban redevelopment in Rochester to environmental conservation of the Genesee River, these projects will promote growth for local businesses while creating jobs in our communities."

Rep. Slaughter secured an amendment in the bill to allow Rochester to access up to \$8 million annually in federal funds to support the restoration of the Erie Canal. The City has proposed an ambitious plan to promote urban redevelopment through restoring and renovating a section of the Erie Canal's historic path through Rochester. In addition to re-watering part of the canal, the funding will provide the city of Rochester with the opportunity to construct pedestrian trails, parks, promenades, and other recreational and other recreational venues in the downtown area.

Also included in the bill is the development of restoration and conservation plans for the Niagara and Genesee Rivers. The project directs the Corps to work with local and state entities to develop a comprehensive plan to restore and protect the Genesee River.

Alternative energy was another one of Rep. Slaughter's top priorities in the WRDA bill. The authorization directs the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study for a low-cost, clean-energy hydroelectric generating facility on the Niagara River. Other Western New York projects include the construction of a breakwater in Olcott Harbor in Niagara County, and the development of restoration and conservation plans for the Niagara and Genesee Rivers.

"The Niagara River is already an important source of clean, renewable energy," said Rep. Slaughter. "This study is the first step towards constructing a next-generation hydroelectric facility that will help make Western New York a national leader in the clean energy economy."

Congress typically authorizes new Army Corps of Engineers water resources studies and projects in a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) before appropriating funds to them. There has been a seven year gap since the last WRDA bill was enacted in 2000. Authorizations had, in the past, followed a biennial schedule to ensure timely funding for important regional projects. In the 109th Congress the House & Senate passed WRDA bills, but a conference agreement could not be reached. House passed their WRDA in July 2005.

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