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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 3, 2007

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House Passes Water Resources Development Act with Broad Bipartisan Support

Washington, DC -Representative Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), today applauded the passage of legislation in the House that will support the City of Rochester's plan to redevelop the Erie Canal.

Rep. Slaughter secured a provision in the Water Resources and Development Act of 2007, or WRDA, which authorizes the City of Rochester to access up to \$8 million in federal funds annually to support the proposed restoration of the Erie Canal.

"The restoration of the Erie Canal is an exciting plan that merits further consideration and development, and by securing access to this funding we will provide Rochester with another resource to develop this innovative approach to urban redevelopment," Rep. Slaughter said. "The passage of this legislation is a victory for all of Western New York, and a renewed commitment to leveraging one of our most unique historical resources: the Erie Canal."

"On behalf of the citizens of the city of Rochester, I would like to thank Rep. Slaughter and the House for passing legislation that will ensure the Erie Canal through downtown is restored to its former glory," said Rochester Mayor Robert J. Duffy. "This project will not only make our downtown a destination, it will be a source of community pride and provide a substantial boost to our downtown revitalization efforts."

The City is considering an ambitious plan to promote urban redevelopment by restoring a section of the Erie Canal's historic path through Rochester. In addition to re-watering part of the canal, the City of Rochester could eventually apply for funding to construct pedestrian trails, parks, promenades, and other recreational venues in the downtown area. This project authorization in WRDA is the first step toward ensuring funding for this project.

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

Since 2001, Rep. Slaughter has also secured \$2.3 million for the City of Rochester to redevelop and rehab the historic Erie Canal Aqueduct in downtown Rochester. The City of Rochester is currently planning for the Aqueduct redevelopment as part of the overall canal reuse plan.

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