

## April 29, 2008 - Slaughter Applauds Passage of Niagara Falls Heritage Area Act in House

Slaughter, Author of Niagara Falls Heritage Area Act, Applauds Passage of Legislation in House

Bill Awaits Signature By President and Enactment Into Law

Washington, DC — Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today applauded the House of Representatives for passing the Niagara Falls Heritage Act as part of S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act. Rep. Slaughter is the author of the original Niagara Falls Heritage Act, legislation that designates Niagara Falls as a National Heritage Area.

Passage in the House today is the final step before the bill goes to the President's desk for his signature, thus enacting it into law.

"Designating Niagara Falls as a national heritage area will promote the natural, historic, and scenic resources of our region to benefit residents and visitors alike," said Rep. Slaughter.

The Niagara Falls Heritage Area Act is designed to heighten national appreciation for the Niagara Falls region, better preserve its natural and historic resources, improve coordination among existing programs at the Falls, enhance the quality of life, and expand the local economy.

"Millions of families travel to Niagara Falls every year to take in the awe-inspiring natural phenomenon that is right in our own backyards," continued Rep. Slaughter. "The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Act gives the Falls the prominent distinction that one of seven wonders of the world deserves."

BACKGROUND:

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Act was introduced on January 28, 2007 in the House, with Senator Charles Schumer introducing a companion bill in the Senate. National Heritage Area designations, awarded by Congress, protect and preserve many of the most unique and highly prized natural resources in the United States. The designation promotes cooperation among preservationists and those involved in community renewal efforts. In Heritage Areas, for and not-for-profit businesses, individuals, and a wide variety of organizations combine their skills and resources for the benefit of their communities.

A National Heritage Area designation will heighten national appreciation for the region, better preserve its natural and historic resources, improve coordination among existing programs at the site, and improve the quality of life and economy of the Niagara region.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will comprise the area stretching from the Western boundary of the Town of Wheatfield to the mouth of the Niagara River, and from the river to Lake Ontario. It will also include the City of Niagara Falls, the Villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, and all land and water lying within these boundaries.

For these reasons, there has been widespread public interest in establishing a National Heritage Area in the Niagara region since 2000, when Western New York leaders met with National Park Service officials to discuss the concept. In 2002, Public Law 107-256, the "Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act," directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. The National Park Service began work on the study in May 2003, and interviewed over 30 local stakeholders, state agencies, local communities, historians, tourism interests, and business interests along the Niagara corridor.

The Niagara National Heritage Area Study report, issued in November 2005, found that the Niagara region met the criteria for establishing a National Heritage Area. The majority of public comments on the Study expressed support for a National Heritage Area that included Niagara Falls and a network of thematically related sites, and was initially managed by a limited five-year federal commission. The National Park Service formally recommended this vision for the Niagara NHA on May 26, 2006. H.R. 1483, which includes the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Act, would implement the National Park Service's final recommendation.

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