



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Congress Passes Spending Bill that Includes Critical Great Lakes Funding**

CHICAGO (Friday, Dec. 18, 2015) — The U.S. House and Senate passed a 2016 federal omnibus budget today that includes important Great Lakes priorities to protect clean water, prevent new invasive species and help keep Great Lakes beaches and rivers healthy and safe for people and wildlife.

“People of our region love the Great Lakes and our nation’s leaders have clearly heard the unifying call to protect them,” said Joel Brammeier, president and CEO of the Alliance for the Great Lakes. “The public demands clean water, safe beaches and a halt to new invasions by species such as Asian carp. We are pleased the Great Lakes congressional delegation worked to include critical provisions to protect and restore the Great Lakes in the FY2016 budget.”

The 2016 budget provides \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to clean up the Great Lakes. Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Reps. David Joyce (R-OH) and Sander Levin (D-MI) were instrumental in securing authorization and funding for the initiative. The Great Lakes congressional delegation has shown tremendous bipartisan support for the initiative and ensured it remains a national priority.

The budget also includes \$1.39 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund — \$510 million for Great Lakes states, an increase over the president’s budget request — to help communities prevent sewage from contaminating beaches and drinking water. Along with critical funding, the budget adds requirements for communities that dump sewage into the Great Lakes to report that activity to the public in a prompt, uniform manner. Sen. Kirk (R-IL) worked to improve the public’s right to know when sewage flows into the Great Lakes and threatens human health. Following this legislation, we look forward to working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure the Great Lakes states have the most protective public-notice requirements in the nation.

Finally, the budget directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite its efforts to address the threat Asian carp pose to the Great Lakes. These efforts include a feasibility study and request for construction authorization at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, and the establishment of formal emergency procedures, such as rapid-response protocols, monitoring and other countermeasures to keep Asian carp from passing beyond Brandon Road Lock and Dam. The Alliance thanks Sens. Baldwin (D-WI), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH) for recognizing the threat Asian carp pose to the Great Lakes and the need to respond to this threat with urgency.

“There is simply no substitute and no replacement for the Great Lakes,” said Molly Flanagan, vice president for policy at the Alliance. “Protecting and restoring the lakes must be job one, and we thank this bipartisan coalition in Congress for its continued efforts to ensure that the Great Lakes — home to 20 percent of the world’s surface freshwater — remain a federal priority.”

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The Alliance for the Great Lakes is the largest organization dedicated solely to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. We work hand in hand with tens of thousands of volunteers, advocates and supporters around the region to pursue protective policies, advance on-the-ground action, and educate our communities. Learn more at [www.greatlakes.org](http://www.greatlakes.org).