

(July 23, 2008) Lipinski Helps Introduce Legislation to Clean Up Great Lakes

Legislation Would Provide Congressional Consent and Approval to Great Lakes Compact

WASHINGTON - Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski joined a bipartisan group of representatives in introducing a Joint Resolution that would grant congressional approval to the Great Lakes Compact. The Compact is an agreement signed by the eight Great Lakes states, including Illinois, to protect the lakes, improve water conservation, and encourage economic growth in the Great Lakes region.

"The Great Lakes remain one of our most vital environmental and economic resources, particularly for the Chicagoland area," said Lipinski. "Preserving the sustainability of the Great Lakes and ensuring high environmental standards will improve our most important fresh water supply. And by encouraging sustainable economic development, we are charting a new course for our energy and economic futures."

In 2005, the Council of Great Lakes Governors (CGLG), a partnership of the governors of the eight Great Lakes states and the Canadian provincial premiers of Ontario and Quebec, finalized the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The Compact is subject to approval by all Great Lakes States and the U.S. Congress.

Specifically, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact would:

- Encourage sustainable economic development and reasonable use of Basin waters;
- Ban any new diversions of water from the Basin with limited exceptions to communities near the Basin;

- Create clear goals and standards for communities to apply for exemption status or appeal decisions;
- Create a consistent standard of review for proposed uses of Basin water while allowing States the flexibility to develop and maintain water management programs;
- Develop regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency and similar programs in each of the eight Great Lakes States; and
- Renew the strong commitment to continued public involvement in the implementation of the Compact.

Congressman Lipinski has been a leader in Congress in protecting Lake Michigan and all of America's waters. Last year he helped fight back BP's plan to increase the dumping of pollution in Lake Michigan from a refinery in Whiting, IN. He also helped introduce the Great Lakes Water Protection Act to ban the dumping of sewage into Lake Michigan and he is a cosponsor of the Clean Water Restoration Act that would reinstitute the protections established by the Clean Water Act 35 years ago.

"Now is the time for all of us, both within Congress and at the state and local levels, to step up to protect our greatest resource," continued Lipinski. "I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this bill that will provide the necessary congressional approval to the Compact to preserve the Great Lakes and encourage our economic growth."