



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

426 Bay Street • Petoskey, MI 49770 • phone: (231) 347-1181 • fax: (231) 347-5928
email: info@watershedcouncil.org website: www.watershedcouncil.org

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Great Lakes are Priority for Washington

The Great Lakes emerged as a top priority in Washington this week, as Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council joined more than 200 citizens, members of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, Great Lakes Commission, and other organizations for the annual Great Lakes Day. In addition to advocates from all the Great Lakes states urging Congress to restore and protect the Great Lakes, a bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers introduced a bill that provides manageable solutions to accomplish that goal.

The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act of 2007, a comprehensive bill that would help stop sewage contamination, prevent invasive species introductions, and restore wetlands, was introduced by U.S. Sens. Carl Levin (D-MI) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio), and U.S. Reps. Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) and Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI). The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act puts into practice priority recommendations of a Great Lakes clean-up plan released in 2005 as part of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, a planning process established by President Bush in 2004.

The comprehensive Great Lakes restoration bill introduced today:

- Prevents sewage contamination by assisting communities nationally with improving their wastewater infrastructure.
- Stops the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species by enacting a comprehensive national program.
- Prevents the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes by authorizing the last line of defense against the fish—an electric barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
- Restores fish and wildlife and their habitat.
- Cleans up contaminated sediment.

“While Great Lakes Day was a huge success, the millions of people who rely on the Great Lakes for their drinking water, economies, and way of life need to let their elected officials know that Great Lakes restoration and protection cannot be one day a year, but must be everyday starting now,” said Jennifer McKay, policy specialist at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. “Every day we wait, the problems facing the Great Lakes get worse and the solutions more costly. This bill provides manageable solutions to restore a resource that is the foundation of the economy and quality of life for millions of Americans.”

jenniferm@watershedcouncil.org (231) 347-1181 ext. 114