

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Reforms to protect the Great Lakes included in bipartisan Coast Guard reauthorization

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the U.S. Senate passed the Coast Guard Reauthorization legislation, which included a number of measures U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin worked to secure in the bipartisan legislation to support the nation's Coast Guard, help Wisconsin's coastal economy, and protect the Great Lakes from pollution and the spread of harmful invasive species.

Senator Baldwin authored improvements to the *Vessel Incidental Discharge Act* (VIDA), which was included in the final Coast Guard Reauthorization, in order to protect U.S. waters, businesses and communities from invasive species. Earlier versions of the legislation included provisions that would have rolled back progress made in the fight against invasive species in the Great Lakes, and protections for water quality.

“After working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make the final Coast Guard reauthorization better, I will support this bipartisan legislation because it helps protect our Great Lakes from the spread of harmful invasive species and supports our coastal economy in Wisconsin,” **said Senator Baldwin.**

As a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, Senator Baldwin worked to

secure substantial updates and include key measures to protect the Great Lakes from the spread of invasive species. Baldwin secured funding for harbor monitoring, the development of Laker ballast treatment technology and improved emergency response tools to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem in the case that new invasive species are detected. Notably, she also worked to ensure that ballast water and other pollutants that could threaten the health of the Great Lakes will continue to be regulated under the Clean Water Act, fighting earlier efforts to remove this entire set of pollutants from our nation's bedrock water protection law.

"The Alliance for the Great Lakes is grateful to Senator Baldwin who has fought tirelessly to protect the Great Lakes from aquatic invasive species," **said Alliance for the Great Lakes Vice President for Policy Molly Flanagan.** "The version of VIDA passed by the Senate today is dramatically improved from a bad version of the bill that Senate Democrats blocked in April 2018. As a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, Senator Baldwin played a pivotal role in negotiating a bill that includes strong protections for the Great Lakes."

"Once again, Senator Baldwin has made safeguarding the Great Lakes a top priority," **said Mary Jean Huston, State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin.** "What was once a very concerning proposal is now much improved by the Senator. The bill will ensure that science drives our response to invasive species threats, and that Wisconsin has tools to prevent invasive species from spreading in the Great Lakes."

An online version of this release is available [here](#).