

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Secures major water infrastructure priorities, applauds passage of WRDA

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Mike Gallagher, a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, today released the following statement after the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Water Resources and Development Act of 2020. The bill, which passed the House unanimously, authorizes projects to improve flood and storm protection, strengthen our ports and harbors, and protect inland waterways.

“The Water Resources and Development Act of 2020 takes critical steps to preserve our natural resources and modernize our nation’s water infrastructure,” said Rep. Gallagher. “Most importantly, it includes a number of provisions I authored that will improve flood mitigation infrastructure in our community, ensure local ports have increased funding, and protect our Great Lakes from invasive species. This is a huge win for Northeast Wisconsin and I look forward to President Trump signing it into law.”

“We want to thank Rep. Gallagher for his leadership to produce bipartisan legislation unanimously passed by the House today that puts the power of nature-based solutions front and center, including funding for the Great Lakes Navigation System and local flood control projects,” said Todd Holshbach, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy Wisconsin State Chapter. “Thanks to his efforts, this legislation will help ensure that critical water resources projects produce multiple benefits for people and nature while targeting resources to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It will also help stop the spread of invasive species into the Great Lakes and further the restoration of lands and waters throughout the upper Mississippi River basin.”

Last month, Rep. Gallagher [called](#) on House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio and Ranking Member Sam Graves to include a number of provisions he wrote that support Northeast Wisconsin.

The final bill includes a number of these initiatives, including:

- Authorization for the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers to conduct a multipurpose study on the Upper Fox River and Wolf River watersheds. This study identifies where flood storage structures can be used to reduce flooding impacts downstream. Flood storage structures improve water quality by filtering nutrients and preventing them from draining into the Lower Fox River and bay of Green Bay.
- Authorization for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a study on the Lower Fox River basin. This study builds on an earlier study on storage capacity for flood waters in the Lower Fox River. If enacted, this would provide the Army Corps the authority to convene stakeholders for the purpose of discussing jurisdictions and developing a comprehensive agreement on the basin for the purposes of flood mitigation.
- A 13% set-aside in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for the Great Lakes Navigation System. Previous legislation included funding for small harbors like the Port of Green Bay, but failed to sufficiently increase the funding to adequate levels. This provision increased the amount allotted to small harbors on the Great Lakes Navigation System from 9.8% to 13%.
- Construction authorization for Brandon Road Lock and Dam and consideration of additional treatment and control techniques to manage invasive species. This would help prevent the movement of certain invasive species, such as Asian Carp, from the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins.
- Clarification that natural and nature-based features can be considered when carrying out Small Flood Control Projects. This allows stakeholders in Northeast Wisconsin to gather data and develop a greater understanding of the efficacy and costs of nature-based solutions, such as wetlands, as a way to help with flood control.