

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Secures major wins for Northeast Wisconsin water conservation

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), in consultation with Wisconsin stakeholders and constituents, today secured critical conservation priorities for Northeast Wisconsin in [H.R. 7575](#), the Water Resources and Development Act of 2020. The bill, which unanimously passed out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, authorizes projects to strengthen our ports and harbors, inland waterways, and improve flood and storm protections. The bill is expected to receive a vote on the House floor later this month.

“Water infrastructure and a healthy Great Lakes region are critical to our way of life in Northeast Wisconsin,” said Rep. Gallagher. “Today’s bill takes important steps to not only strengthen local waterways, but additionally find ways to protect these resources for generations to come. I’m glad the bill includes many of my provisions to support Northeast Wisconsin, including a watershed study for the Upper and Lower Fox River basins, and look forward to continue working to maintain and improve the water infrastructure in our community.”

“We want to thank Rep. Gallagher for his leadership to produce bipartisan legislation that puts the power of nature-based solutions front and center. 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,” said Todd Holschbach, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin.

The bill incorporated a number of provisions that Rep. Gallagher championed. Key highlights for Northeast Wisconsin include:

- 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 12% 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 12%.
- 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.

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