

Duckworth, Durbin highlight Illinois priorities included in Water Resources Development Act reauthorization

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) and Ranking Member on the Fisheries, Wildlife and Water Senate Subcommittee, and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) applauded the inclusion of several of their priorities that will help Illinois in the *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018*, which passed the Senate today by a vote of 99-1. The legislation will save Illinois taxpayer dollars by increasing the federal cost-share at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, help schools test for lead in drinking water, improve urban flooding prevention and response as well as expand water infrastructure funding across Illinois and the nation.

“I’m proud to have secured these provisions that will benefit our state’s economy, save Illinois taxpayer dollars, protect children from lead in their water and create jobs through investments in water infrastructure. This legislation will help improve Army Corps programs, improve public health and safeguard our environment,” said Duckworth. “I look forward to the President signing it.”

"When it comes to funding critical infrastructure projects, I will always fight for Illinois' priorities," said Durbin. "I'm pleased that this legislation provides much needed investments that will help modernize our nation's water infrastructure and ensure access to clean drinking water for our constituents. It funds important Army Corps of Engineers projects that will prevent flooding in our communities and protect against the spread of Asian Carp to the Great Lakes. The Senate was able to work together to pass this important bipartisan bill and now it heads to the President's desk."

Today's legislation includes the following Duckworth/Durbin priorities to:

- Improve federal cost sharing for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam from 50% to 80%, which will help reduce Illinois taxpayers' burden while supporting the environment. The legislation also directs the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to consult with Illinois' Governor on the construction of future invasive species technologies.
- Authorize \$4.4 billion nationwide for drinking water projects over three years to help communities in Illinois and across the nation modernize their drinking water systems.
- Provide an additional \$10 million to help schools voluntarily test for lead contamination in their drinking water, helping achieve the goals of Duckworth's [*Get the Lead out of Schools Act*](#). Today's legislation also requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist schools in obtaining financial assistance to eliminate lead contamination.
- Support efforts to combat urban flooding by studying USACE regulations to facilitate more active federal participation in urban flooding events. The bill also promotes local management best practices to help Illinois communities develop innovative solutions that address storm water runoff, prevent flooding, reduce groundwater depletion and mitigate water quality impairments.
- Extend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) pilot program through Fiscal Year 2021 by \$50 million annually to accelerate water infrastructure investment by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects.

- Authorize the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, which will be coordinated by the USACE, NOAA, USGS, FEMA, and EPA and lead to recommendations on how to best manage and protect the Great Lakes coastline. The bill also reinforces efforts to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species like Asian Carp.
- Improve U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects in Illinois by increasing transparency, enhancing effectiveness and reducing costs. This includes providing additional input opportunities for state, local and regional stakeholders, and modernizing USACE benefit-cost analysis to support the advancement of regionally significant projects like the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.
- Help local governments better respond to and rebound from major weather events by integrating USACE's work with local municipal stormwater management projects.
- Improve USACE efficiency and cost-effectiveness by requiring the National Academy of Sciences to provide recommendations on the efficacy of current Corps civil works organizational structure as well as how to improve Corps' economic principles and analytical methodologies when evaluating project budgets.