

year, \$20 million study and proposing "Plan 2007", the IJC is proposing to maintain the status quo and change little from the current management plan. "Plan 2007" will not restore the natural cyclical rhythms of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as was proposed in "Plan B+", the widely supported management proposal developed in the IJC Study that would provide significant environmental improvements to the region.

Audubon New York and the National Audubon Society applauds your attention to the need to restore the coastal ecosystems of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, and strongly supports your resolution calling for the adoption of a regulation that provides ecosystem benefits, and addresses the concerns of the public and the State of New York. We thank you for your strong efforts on this critical issue, and look forward to working with you and our partners throughout the region to ensure a sound environmental plan is implemented.

Sincerely,

ALBERT E. CACCесе,
Executive Director.
JOHN FLICKER,
President.

DUCKS UNLIMITED,
Ann Arbor, MI, April 17, 2008.
Congressman JOHN MCHUGH,
House of Representatives, Rayburn HOB, Wash-
ington, DC.

Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER,
House of Representatives, Rayburn HOB, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH AND CON-
GRESSWOMAN SLAUGHTER: On behalf of the
16,000 Ducks Unlimited members in New
York, I would like to thank you for your ini-
tiative on developing the resolution regard-
ing the water level management plan for
Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. As
you know, DU has been engaged in this issue
for many years, and strongly encouraged the
International Joint Commission to adopt
Plan B+ for future water level management
of the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence system. In
our scientific opinion, Plan B+ delivered the
best overall environmental, economic and
social benefits to all affected interests.

In our opinion, Plan 2007 as presented by
the IJC does not go far enough to remedy the
past management regime, nor look forward
enough to ensure multiple future benefits for
the majority of affected people and re-
sources. DU is mobilizing our membership to
be present at the public information sessions
and public hearings scheduled by the IJC so
that our voice will be heard.

Therefore, Ducks Unlimited supports your
bi-partisan House Resolution calling for the
IJC to increase the level of environmental
protections and benefits, fully consider the
views of the public and State of New York
when selecting the new plan, and maximize
hydropower production (in line with Plan
B+). Again, thank you for your leadership on
this issue, and rest assured that Ducks Un-
limited will be following this important en-
vironmental issue very closely.

Sincerely,

RAY WHITTEMORE,
Director of Conservation Programs.

APRIL 22, 2008.

Hon. JOHN MCHUGH,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH AND CON-
GRESSWOMAN SLAUGHTER, We, the under-
signed organizations, are writing to express
our support for the house resolution you've
developed that urges the International Joint

Commission to adopt a water management
plan for the St. Lawrence River and Lake
Ontario that takes into consideration envi-
ronmental needs and the concerns of the
public and affected States and urges the Se-
cretary of State to reject any plan that does
not do so.

Since the completion of the Moses-Sau-
nders hydropower dam 50 years ago, the Lake
Ontario and St. Lawrence River ecosystems
have suffered consistent losses to their glob-
ally significant biodiversity due to unnatu-
ral and damaging water levels regulation.
The current, 50 year-old regulation scheme
has artificially constrained water levels, re-
sulting in considerable damage to more than
50% of the region's coastal wetlands and sig-
nificant impacts to many fish species and
nesting water birds.

After more than five years of study funded
by \$20-million taxpayer dollars, the IJC has
the information necessary to select a sci-
entific-based and publicly supported
management plan that would deliver signifi-
cant environmental improvements to the re-
gion. Instead, the IJC has turned its back on
the Lake and River environment by pro-
posing a plan—Plan 2007—that continues,
and perhaps even worsens, the environ-
mental destruction of the Lake and River.

In a time of unprecedented momentum to-
wards restoring the Great Lakes-St. Law-
rence system, the actions by the IJC that
would reverse restoration programs are un-
acceptable.

We applaud your efforts to ensure that the
environment of the St. Lawrence River and
Lake Ontario are protected from further
damage. By introducing and supporting this
resolution, you are sending a strong signal
to the International Joint Commission that
the status quo, which has resulted in the sig-
nificant losses of wetlands throughout the
River and Lake ecosystem, is not acceptable.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caddick, Executive Director,
Save The River/Upper St. Lawrence
Riverkeeper; Joel Brammeier, Vice
President for Policy, Alliance for the
Great Lakes; April H. Gromnicki, Esq.,
Director, Ecosystem Restoration, Au-
dubon; Albert E. Caccese, Executive Di-
rector, Audubon New York; Julie M.
Barrett O'Neill, Esq., Riverkeeper and
Executive Director, Buffalo Niagara
Riverkeeper; Dereth Glance, Executive
Program Director, Citizens Campaign
for the Environment; Gildo M. Tori, Di-
rector of Public Policy, Ducks Unlim-
ited; Katherine Nadeau, Water & Nat-
ural Resources Program Associate, En-
vironmental Advocates of New York;
Jill Ryan, Executive Director, Fresh-
water Future; Mary Muter, Vice Presi-
dent, Environment, Georgian Bay-
keeper for Georgian Bay Association
and Foundation; Thomas Marks, NY
Director, Great Lakes Sport Fishing
Council.

John Jackson, Director, Clean Produc-
tion, Great Lakes United; Robert A.
Sweeney, PhD, Executive Director,
International Association for Great
Lakes Research; Nancy Foster, Se-
cretary, International Water Levels Co-
alition; Les Monostory, President, New
York Division, Izaak Walton League;
Robert M. Borchak, Director at Large,
Michigan United Conservation Clubs;
Karen M. Schapiro, Executive Director,
Midwest Environmental Advocates;
Andy Buchsbaum, Regional Executive
Director, National Wildlife Federation;
Harold L. Palmer, President, New York
State Conservation Council; Aaron R.
Vogel, Executive Director, Thousand
Islands Land Trust; Bill Pielsticker,
Legislative Chair, Wisconsin Council of
Trout Unlimited.

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE AND SIMPLIFICATION ACT (H.R. 5719)

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam
Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Tax-
payer Assistance and Simplification Act (H.R.
5719). I want to thank Chairman RANGEL and
Subcommittee Chairman LEWIS for bringing
this legislation to the floor which modernizes
IRS functions by responding to recommenda-
tions by the Taxpayer Advocate.

The Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification
Act helps to simplify the tax process and pro-
tect taxpayers from abuses. It strengthens pro-
tection from identity theft and tax fraud by re-
quiring the IRS to notify taxpayers if it sus-
pects identity theft. H.R. 5719 also makes the
tax process simpler by eliminating an outdated
requirement for detailed records of calls made
on employer-provided cell phones. It strength-
ens outreach to ensure that working families
entitled to the Earned Income Tax Credit re-
ceive the refund they have earned and pro-
vides protections from predators.

H.R. 5719 helps to ensure tax fairness by
closing an offshore loophole that allows gov-
ernment contractors, who receive millions or
billions in taxpayers' dollars, to set up compa-
nies in foreign countries to avoid paying Social
Security and Medicare taxes. For example,
defense contractor KBR, has reportedly avoid-
ed paying over \$100 million in Social Security
and Medicare taxes by creating shell compa-
nies in the Cayman Islands.

This important bill also puts an end to the
use of private debt collection agencies to col-
lect Federal income taxes and ensure that this
critical government function is performed by
public servants on behalf of American tax-
payers. Despite aggressive tactics, contractors
only brought in a little more than half of what
it cost the IRS to implement the program. IRS
agents can do this more efficiently and ending
this program prevents the possible misuse of
confidential taxpayer information. Our constitu-
ents deserve to know that the person con-
tacting them on behalf of the Federal Govern-
ment is a public-servant, who is held to the
highest standards of accountability and con-
fidentiality, not a person whose paycheck de-
pends solely on the number of collections they
make.

I urge my colleagues to support the Tax-
payer Assistance and Simplification Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GRAND OPENING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMU- NITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, it
is a great honor for me to rise today to recog-
nize the grand opening on April 25, 2008, of
the Department of Veterans Affairs Commu-
nity-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in
Okaloosa County, located in the First Con-
gressional District in Northwest Florida.

This momentous occasion has been a long time coming for the ever-growing veterans' population along Florida's Emerald Coast. With the highest veterans' population of any congressional district in the Nation, many of the residents of Okaloosa County and the immediate areas have had to drive significant distances for some of the most basic outpatient care from the VA. This area was identified years ago as an underserved area for VA healthcare, and was marked as a priority location for future VA construction. Now completed and ready to receive patients, this CBOC will alleviate travel time and provide efficient access to VA healthcare for those veterans.

Beautiful beaches, warm weather, and friendly neighbors encourage many to call the Florida panhandle "home." With five military installations in my district alone it is little wonder that active and retired military and nearly 110,000 veterans make up a tremendous portion of my constituency. While many already saw the need for improved access to VA care, it took a coordinated effort from many interested parties to make this event a reality. There was no doubt that this facility is what our area's veterans needed and deserved.

A co-sharing agreement between VA and the Department of Defense has been a huge factor in bringing about this moment. By using land on Eglin Air Force base, in close proximity to the base hospital, veterans using the VA clinic have access to various DoD resources and active servicemembers stationed there have access to part of the clinic's specialty care. In addition, the use of DoD land ensures that VA does not have to deal with finding and acquiring land, resulting in the best deal for taxpayers and veterans alike.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to recognize the efforts of all who worked toward bringing this important facility to Okaloosa County, Florida. We have an eternal debt of gratitude to our servicemen and women, and this much-needed VA clinic is one way that we can begin to say thank you for ensuring that the liberty continues to shine a bright light over our country.

COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide and to celebrate a people who despite murder, hardship, and betrayal have persevered.

Throughout three decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, millions of Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homeland of three thousand years and deported or massacred. From 1894 through 1896, three hundred thousand Armenians were ruthlessly murdered. Again in 1909, thirty thousand Armenians were massacred in Cilicia, and their villages were destroyed.

On April 24, 1915, two hundred Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arbitrarily arrested, taken to Turkey and murdered. This incident marks a dark and solemn period in the history the Armenian people.

From 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Empire launched a systematic campaign to exterminate Armenians. In eight short years, more than 1.5 million Armenians suffered through atrocities such as deportation, forced slavery and torture. Most were ultimately murdered.

Many of our companions in the international community have already taken a final step towards healing and reconciliation. The European Parliament and the United Nations have recognized and reaffirmed the Armenian Genocide as historical fact, as have the Russian and Greek parliaments, the Canadian House of Commons, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies and the French National Assembly. It is time for America to join the chorus and acknowledge the Armenians who suffered at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. And let me stress that I am not speaking of the government of modern day Turkey, but rather its predecessor, which many of Turkey's present day leaders helped to remove from power.

As I have in the past, as a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I will continue to work with my colleagues and with the Armenian-Americans in my district to promote investment and prosperity in Armenia. And, I sincerely hope that this year, the U.S. will have the opportunity and courage to speak in support of the millions of Armenians who suffered because of their heritage.

COMMEMORATING THE 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the 1.5 million men, women and children who were killed and the 500,000 survivors who were expelled from their homes during the Armenian Genocide. Today marks the 93rd anniversary of the beginning of a systematic effort carried out by the Ottoman Empire, which ultimately resulted in the elimination of ethnic Armenians from their historic homeland.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman authorities arrested approximately 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Istanbul. Following this episode, the military proceeded to round up hundreds of thousands of Armenians and force them to march hundreds of miles into present day Syria, denying them food and water along the way. Those that were not slaughtered and survived the treacherous journey were brutally raped and beaten along the way.

The root of this occurrence can be attributed to an official policy of discrimination, which culminated in genocide. I urge my colleagues to read Samantha Powers widely acclaimed book, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, which clearly describes this as genocide.

May we all take a moment to remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide, one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th century. We remember, not so that we may dwell on the events of the past, but so that we may renew our personal commitments to never stand idly by and let such a tragedy happen again.

COMMEMORATING THE 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker. I wish to commemorate the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On April 23, 1915, the world suffered its first deliberate act of systematic mass murder of people of one culture by another—and the unspeakable crime of genocide was born. The massacre and mistreatment of approximately 1.5 million Armenians in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire epitomizes the depths of inhumanity that the human race is capable of.

Out of this wretched episode of history, we have made a determined effort to move beyond hatred, to recognize mistakes, and to prevent similar events from occurring in the future. It is our obligation to learn from lapses in moral judgment and forge safeguards for all oppressed, vulnerable, and subjugated peoples.

I would like to express my sympathy to the survivors and descendants of the Armenian Genocide. I hope we can all take time to reflect on this solemn day of remembrance.

HONORING TURKEY'S SHARED COMMITMENT TO SPREADING DEMOCRACY AND DEFEATING EXTREMISM

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a strong friendship that has proven enormously important since the beginning of the Cold War. Time and time again, the Republic of Turkey has stood firmly with the United States as we have pursued our shared goals in a region where we have few steady allies. Turkey, a fellow NATO country, is a vital partner in our fight against extremism and an example of a vibrant democracy in a region burdened with inequality.

Turkey's assistance in supporting combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has been instrumental in our efforts to bring opportunity and prosperity to millions of people. Its proximity to both countries has made it an ideal place to coordinate logistics and center supply routes. Over 74 percent of the air cargo that reaches American forces in Iraq passes through Incirlik Air Base in Southern Turkey, and around 4,000 trucks carrying fuel, food, and water cross into Iraq from Turkey every day.

The Turkish government also has provided over \$50 million for reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and another \$100 million for Afghanistan. Turkey has committed over 800 troops and assumed command of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) Regional Command Center in Kabul. Their Provincial Reconstruction Team has trained over 1,900 members of the Afghan army, treated 650,000 patients at two fully equipped hospitals and four clinics, and educated 37,000 young minds at