



Erie Canalway News Release

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President Obama Signs Legislation Benefitting Upstate New York

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor authorization extended to 2015- Continuing access to valuable federal dollars

WATERFORD- Today the President signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 which includes language to extend the authorization of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor for five years. The measure makes valuable federal resources available for communities from Albany to Buffalo. The Corridor extends 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York, and encompasses 234 cities, towns, and villages that border the New York State Canal System.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission, which oversees management of the Corridor, is authorized to receive up to \$1 million annually to support its efforts to preserve historic and cultural resources and promote heritage development throughout the Corridor. The commission has leveraged more than 14.2 million dollars to date by matching its federal appropriation. This extension provides access to federal resources and National Park Service technical assistance and expertise through 2015.

Erie Canalway Commission Chair Joseph Callahan said: "Our congressional delegation worked diligently to pass this legislation and we look forward to working with them to seize this opportunity for Upstate New York. It's time for Upstate to shine."

Both Senators Schumer and Gillibrand supported the legislation, as did eight members of the House of Representatives whose districts overlap with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

Senator Schumer said: "The Erie Canal holds a special place in New York State's history, and the legislation that passed today will make sure it has a special place in its future, too. The Erie Canal remains one of upstate New York's untapped resources and this legislation will preserve, protect and promote locations along the canal -- from Albany to Buffalo -- for years to come."

"Passage of this legislation will ensure we can maintain the history of the Erie Canal and the rich character of Upstate New York," said Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. "These federal dollars will go a long way to help preserve the Erie Canal Corridor, promote our natural heritage, and maintain access for our communities and tourists alike."

Rep. Louise Slaughter said: "The Erie Canalway Corridor is a valuable cultural and economical resource for our region. I am especially proud that Upstate New York's Congressional Delegation came together to push forward legislation that will help preserve the natural beauty and rich heritage of our area for generations to come."

“Preserving and protecting the history and natural resources of Upstate New York is essential to our economic growth and development in the future,” said Rep. Michael Arcuri, “I am proud to join my colleagues in our effort to promote the Erie Canalway Corridor and look forward to the continued progress of this valuable project.”

“The Erie Canal is a treasured part of Western New York’s history,” said Rep. Higgins. “This legislation allows us to protect this important historic and cultural resource for generations to come and to promote the Erie Canal as a tourist destination for today’s visitors.”

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) said: “This extension of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor will allow us to expand our efforts to celebrate the rich cultural and historical heritage of this important part of our state. I was proud to support this bill, which will create additional opportunities for residents and visitors to learn more about our state's past while creating additional tourism opportunities in our state today that will help spur economic activity.”

“The Erie Canal is a key part of our history both nationally and in Western New York in particular,” said Rep. Chris Lee. “This legislation ensures the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor program has the tools it needs to continue its mission of protecting this historic waterway and promoting economic development in our region.”

Rep. Dan Maffei said: “The Erie Canal is key part of our history in Upstate New York. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is working to protect and enhance the rich historical, recreational, and scenic amenities that make our canal towns such wonderful places to live, work and visit. I'm pleased to support this legislation that will enable the Erie Canalway Commission to continue this important work for our communities.”

“I was proud to support the Omnibus Public Land Management Act because it contained good programs like the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor” said Rep. Eric Massa. “The Erie Canal is a national treasure and we must protect and preserve it.”

Rep. Paul Tonko said: “The implementation of sound land use policy is critical to providing the green space which allows access to the treasured resources along the Erie Canalway Corridor. This legislation will guarantee that access for residents and tourists, and preserve our heritage without interfering with the rights of sportsmen.”

In addition to extending the authorization of the Commission from 2010 to 2015, the legislation includes other important provisions that will enhance the Commission’s ability to serve Canalway communities.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is one of 49 federally designated National Heritage Areas. Its purpose is to help preserve and interpret the historical, natural, scenic, and recreational resources reflecting its national significance and to help foster revitalization of canal-side communities. For additional information: www.eriecanalway.org.

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