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## Oppose Great Lakes Provisions in S. 1645 providing FY16 Appropriations for Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, and Related Agencies

Section 428 of [S. 1645](#) would require all publicly-owned wastewater treatment agencies that discharge directly or indirectly to the Great Lakes to eliminate all combined sewer overflows (CSO), including those discharged in compliance with a CSO Long Term Control Plan (LTCP); and, it would prohibit agencies from discharging blended effluent that otherwise meets standards established in an agency's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit during peak wet weather events.

- Section 428 directly contradicts and undermines legislation Congress enacted in 2001 codifying the 1994 CSO Control Policy with which the majority of Great Lakes dischargers are currently complying. The CSO Control Policy sets forth national goals and standards for the reduction of CSOs by publicly-owned treatment works (POTW) and requires the development of LTCP to comply with these standards.
- Of the 184 CSO dischargers to the Great Lakes, 170 permittees have developed and are implementing LTCP in accordance with the CSO Control Policy, at a cost of tens of billions of dollars to ratepayers. Section 428 would require these communities to go back to the drawing board and spend tens of billions of additional ratepayer dollars to achieve a near impossible goal of zero overflows without regard to corresponding improvements in water quality. For example, Cleveland, Ohio estimates that complying with Section 428 would cost its ratepayers \$16.5 billion.
- Section 428 would prohibit communities from utilizing an important operations tool (blending) that safeguards the integrity of their wastewater treatment system without diminishing water quality during periods of extreme wet weather, thereby imposing unnecessary additional costs by handcuffing communities as they attempt to comply with the overflow mandate.
- Section 428 would require communities to spend limited ratepayer resources on eliminating overflows at the expense of other pressing Great Lakes challenges including excessive amounts of nutrients caused by inadequate conservation practices, soil erosion caused by inadequate stormwater management practices, and invasive species.

Section 428 proposes a dramatic shift in clean water policy, one that would impose catastrophic costs to ratepayers throughout the Great Lakes region and result in negligible water quality improvement. At the very least, such a dramatic policy shift should be considered through the normal legislative process so that the policy and cost implications can be fully debated and the impacted communities can be fully heard, and not through the congressional appropriations process that does not allow for a full airing of concerns.

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