

GREAT LAKES LOBBY DAY 2009

The Lake Michigan League of Women Voters (LMLWV) (www.lmilo.org) is a member of the Healing our Waters-Great Lakes (HOW) Coalition and supports its lobbying agenda as it pertains to protecting and restoring Lake Michigan. Five LMLWV members traveled to Washington D.C. for the 4th annual Great Lakes Day, February 24-25. The HOW Coalition had more than 120 citizen activists representing all of the eight Great Lakes states attending the event.

For the first time ever, staff of the Administration participated in the event! Newly installed US EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Council on Environmental Quality Director Nancy Sutley addressed the Coalition members and reaffirmed President Obama's commitment to the Great Lakes and to all of the "Great Waters" efforts nationally. Participants also enjoyed a party at the Canadian Embassy where speakers included the Canadian Ambassador and Congressman Jim Oberstar.

Activists visited the offices of the congressmen and senators from the Lake Michigan basin and made their case for increased funding for Great Lakes programs, as well as passage of the Great Lakes Legacy Act and related legislation like the Clean Water Restoration Act.

As Coalition members descended on Capitol Hill, good news for the Great Lakes was beginning to filter out from the White House. The President's budget included \$475 million dollars of restoration funding for the Great Lakes, exceeding the expectations of the lobbying delegation! In addition, \$3.9 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs was included in the budget to fund projects like water treatment facilities, replacement of aging water pipes, and separation of combined sewers. Such projects are both good for the environment and create construction jobs. These proposals are in addition to funding included in the stimulus package, of which more than \$1 billion could come to the Great Lakes.

The \$475 million restoration funding made it out of the budget committees of both the House and the Senate, but is subject to revision at a later stage in the budget approval process. League members may be asked to call their legislators to support clean water funding as the budget moves through Congress. Stay tuned for legislative updates, too. There are several bills that we are supporting.

COMING THIS OCTOBER LMLWV ANNUAL MEETING

**October 2nd and 3rd
Saugatuck, Michigan**

Watch for details and register to join us for this annual event.