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TOP STORY

## Upstate NY reps want Lake Ontario shoreline damage report

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FILE - In this June 2017 photo, private docks are under water in Fair Haven in June.

The Citizen file

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A trio of upstate New York members of Congress is requesting a report examining the damage to Lake Ontario's shoreline last year.

U.S. Reps. Chris Collins, John Katko and Claudia Tenney have asked House Speaker Paul Ryan and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen to include language requiring the report in an upcoming omnibus spending bill. The language would authorize the State Department to assess damage to the shoreline and report on Plan 2014, a Lake Ontario water management plan administered by the International Joint Commission.

Flooding that occurred along Lake Ontario last year has been attributed to record rainfall. But some elected officials have blamed Plan 2014 for the high water levels.

"Together with Reps. Collins and Tenney, I am committed to ensuring shoreline property owners, municipalities, farmers and businesses are able to recover from the severe flooding our region faced in 2017," Katko, R-Camillus, said. "As part of this effort, it is critical that we take steps to assess the detrimental impact of Plan 2014 on communities along Lake Ontario. Doing so will help our local officials take action to mitigate future damages and increase preparedness."

There was a similar push last year to have the State Department review Plan 2014 and Lake Ontario shoreline damage. The report was included in a spending bill by U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the State Department. But the spending bill wasn't signed into law.

The language supported by Collins, R-Clarence, Katko, and Tenney, R-New Hartford, would also require the State Department to detail options for compensating shoreline property owners affected by last year's flooding.

Collins hopes the Plan 2014 report won't be the last action by President Donald Trump's administration. He expressed confidence that the Trump administration will replace the U.S. commissioners on the International Joint Commission "with individuals that will get rid of this disastrous plan."

"My constituents deserve more answers about the significant flooding along the Lake Ontario shoreline that took place last year," Collins said. "It's important to understand the true impacts of Plan 2014 so we can find a workable solution moving forward."

Congress is working to draft a spending bill that would fund the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. The spending bill must be adopted by March 23 to avoid a government shutdown.

