

LARSON CALLS ON BUSH TO SUPPORT

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LARSON CALLS ON BUSH TO SUPPORT AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS INITIATIVE Connecticut River is one of 14 in U.S. with Historic Distinction

HARTFORD—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) has co-signed a letter to the President urging him to continue the American Heritage Rivers Initiative (AHRI) begun under President Clinton in 1997. The initiative is designed to advance environmental protection of the rivers, as well as to enhance area economic growth, and preserve each river's historic and cultural heritage. Of the 126 communities that submitted names of rivers for consideration by an advisory committee named by Clinton, only 14 were selected, one of which is the Connecticut River.

"This initiative helps to cultivate and maintain the historic Connecticut Riverfront, as well as generating economic, cultural, and recreational opportunities in the communities that line the river," said Larson. "It is an honor to have had the river that runs through the center of our state, and the First District, named as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers in the United States, and we must make a commitment to ensure that these rivers receive the attention they deserve."

The rivers that have the distinction of being an American Heritage River were chosen because of their historical significance and natural beauty, and run through 24 states. The AHRI utilizes federal, state, and local dollars and resources to best serve the rivers, and also seeks to develop partnerships between communities, business, and government, to ensure the initiative is a grass roots effort with local control.

A group of 32 Members of Congress from both the House and Senate representing the American Heritage Rivers Congressional Caucus, of which Larson is a member, signed the letter to the President. The group also requested a meeting with the President to further discuss their interest in continuing the initiative during his term in office.

They wrote in the letter: "Rivers are the living, breathing resources of our urban centers and rural landscapes. They play an integral role in our nation's history and provide avenues for trade; opportunities for commerce, forestry and agriculture; playgrounds for recreation; and habitats for wildlife. In recent years, revitalization of our river systems has become the primary focus of numerous local communities and organizations across the country."

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