



Great Lakes Legislative Caucus

March 22, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3011

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen and Calvert and Ranking Members Lowey and McCollum,

As members of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus (GLLC), we are writing to express our strong support for the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLLC is the only nonpartisan, binational organization of state and provincial legislators from the eight states and two Canadian provinces that share the Great Lakes: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. As legislators from the Great Lakes states, we know firsthand the ecological and economic significance of the Great Lakes to our region and our nation. The lakes contain 84 percent of the surface fresh water in North America and provide drinking water to nearly 40 million people in the U.S. and Canada. Over 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the lakes, generating an estimated \$62 billion annually in wages in industries such as manufacturing, tourism, and shipping. Our Great Lakes are both a natural wonder and an economic engine that deserve our unwavering support.

Federal investment in the GLRI is vitally important to clean up toxic sites, reduce runoff that contributes to harmful algal blooms, restore habitat, and control aquatic invasive species (AIS). Since its inception, the GLRI has directly benefited our states and local communities from projects that have led to the cleanup of toxic Areas of Concern (AOCs) such as Pennsylvania's Presque Isle Bay AOC, and the Deer Lake, White Lake, and St. Clair River AOCs in Michigan. Significant progress has been made on nine other AOCs in Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin, with all cleanup actions scheduled to be completed by 2019. These restored sites

and continuing cleanup projects are tangible benefits of the GLRI and they demonstrate a significant return on investment.

The GLRI also provides critical funding for AIS control efforts, such as the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee that is implementing the Asian Carp Action Plan; the deployment of controls in national forests, parks, and wildlife refuges; and the development and testing of new technologies and methods for preventing the introduction and spread of AIS (e.g., new ballast water management systems). GLRI funding leverages additional resources as project partners at the state, local, and tribal level commit to continue much-needed maintenance and stewardship activities long after the federally funded projects are completed.

The GLRI is also essential for addressing the problems caused by harmful algal blooms that are the byproduct of polluted runoff from agricultural and urban lands. During FY 2016, federal agencies and their partners funded nutrient and sediment reduction projects on over 89,000 acres of priority watersheds in the Great Lakes Basin. The GLRI also funded green infrastructure projects in 13 Great Lakes shoreline cities in Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. These projects help to improve water quality in the Great Lakes basin by treating, slowing, or capturing untreated storm water runoff before it enters the lakes and their tributaries.

In the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) FY2016 Annual Report on the GLRI, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt observed, "The GLRI is protecting public health in the Great Lakes more than any other coordinated interagency effort in U.S. history, and helping to ensure that our children and their children live in safer, healthier communities." We agree with Administrator Pruitt and feel strongly that this important work to restore the Great Lakes must continue. Our states cannot do it alone; we need the federal government to invest responsibly and consistently in the GLRI. In 2016, the 114th Congress authorized the initiative at \$300 million annually for five years. It is our sincere hope that the 115th Congress will follow through on this commitment and fully fund the GLRI in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. By copy of this letter to the Congressional delegations from the Great Lakes states, we encourage their action in support of the GLRI.

We appreciate your leadership and your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to brief you on the vital importance of the Great Lakes to our citizens, businesses, and industries and to discuss our position in support of the GLRI. If you have any questions about this letter or wish to arrange a briefing, please contact Lisa Janairo at 920.458.5910.


Sincerely,



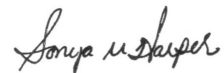
Senator Darwin Boohar, Michigan
Chair, Great Lakes Legislative Caucus



Senator Pamela J. Althoff, Illinois



Representative Laura Fine, Illinois



Representative Sonya Marie Harper, Illinois



Senator Ed Charbonneau, Indiana



Senator Karen R. Tallian, Indiana



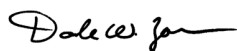
Representative Hal Slager, Indiana



Senator Tom Casperson, Michigan



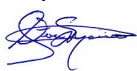
Senator Wayne A. Schmidt, Michigan



Senator Dale Zorn, Michigan



Representative Donna Lasinski, Michigan



Representative Steve Marino, Michigan



Representative Sam Singh, Michigan



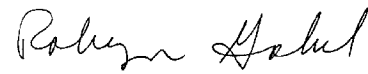
Representative Rob VerHeulen, Michigan



Senator Chris A. Eaton, Minnesota



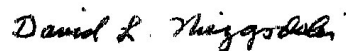
Senator Jerry Newton, Minnesota



Representative Robyn Gabel, Illinois



Representative Juliana Stratton, Illinois



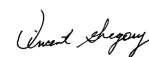
Senator David L. Niezgodski, Indiana



Representative Earl Harris, Jr., Indiana



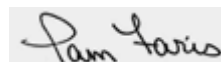
Senator Steve Bieda, Michigan



Senator Vincent Gregory, Michigan



Senator Rebekah Warren, Michigan



Representative Pam Faris, Michigan



Representative Dan Lauwers, Michigan



Representative David Maturen, Michigan



Representative Curt VanderWall, Michigan



Senator Steve Cwodzinski, Minnesota



Senator John Marty, Minnesota



Senator Ann H. Rest, Minnesota



Senator David H. Senjem, Minnesota



Representative Rick Hansen, Minnesota



Representative Jennifer Schultz, Minnesota



Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, New York



Senator Matthew J. Dolan, Ohio



Representative Stephanie Howse, Ohio



Representative John Patterson, Ohio



Representative Michael Sheehy, Ohio



Representative Curtis G. Sonney,
Pennsylvania



Senator Fred A. Risser, Wisconsin



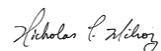
Representative Joan A. Ballweg, Wisconsin



Representative Dave Considine, Wisconsin



Representative Eric Genrich, Wisconsin



Representative Nick Milroy, Wisconsin



Senator Erik Simonson, Minnesota



Representative Liz Olson, Minnesota



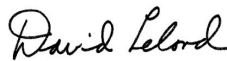
Representative JoAnn Ward, Minnesota



Assemblyman Peter Lawrence, New York



Representative Tavia Galonski, Ohio



Representative David Leland, Ohio



Representative Dan Ramos, Ohio



Representative Kent Smith, Ohio



Senator Janet Bewley, Wisconsin



Representative Jimmy Anderson, Wisconsin



Representative Terese Berceau, Wisconsin



Representative David Crowley, Wisconsin



Representative Gary A. Hebl, Wisconsin



Representative Tod Ohnstad, Wisconsin

Melissa Sargent

Representative Melissa Sargent, Wisconsin

Mark Spreitzer

Representative Mark Spreitzer, Wisconsin

Lisa Subeck

Representative Lisa Subeck, Wisconsin

Christine Sinicki

Representative Christine Sinicki, Wisconsin

Amanda Stuck

Representative Amanda Stuck, Wisconsin

cc: Congressional delegations from the Great Lakes states