



March 25, 2010

The Honorable Vernon Ehlers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ehlers:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters<sup>®</sup>-Great Lakes Coalition, we want to add our Coalition's name to the list of organization's endorsing your bill H.R. 4755, the Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act of 2010.

The region has been working together successfully for the last five years to implement a science-based plan of action for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes. Spending new resources must be done effectively and transparently, however, if we're to see cleaner water, healthier people, new jobs, and an enhanced way of life. Restoration funding must target the right priorities and the right areas. Ongoing efforts will be most effective if they follow the input from the people, communities and stakeholders who know the problems and their solutions.


The Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act helps achieve these goals and propels restoration forward by putting in place a permanent restoration framework. First, GLEPA permanently establishes the popular, multi-year Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and links its implementation to our regional plans. It does this by enhancing regional accountability and transparency through the creation of a leadership council that recommends restoration priorities that federal agencies use when setting their budgets each year. The bill also increases coordination between federal agencies by establishing the federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and between federal agencies and non-federal stakeholders through a new multi-stakeholder management board. Lastly, the bill would re-authorize both the Great Lakes Legacy Act and the Great Lakes National Program Office to ensure EPA has the administration to support its expanded responsibility to coordinate Great Lakes restoration efforts.

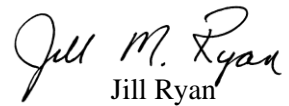
The Great Lakes represent 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water. They support millions of jobs and one of the largest economies in the world. Although progress has been made, much more remains to be done, and the longer we wait, the solutions to the problems facing the Great Lakes become more complicated and more expensive to solve. GLEPA keeps us focused on these international landmarks.

Again, we endorse your legislation and stand ready to do what we can to see it become law this year.

Sincerely,

  
Tom Kiernan  
Co-chair

  
Andy Buchsbaum  
Co-chair

  
Jill Ryan  
Co-chair