



Healing Our Waters[®]-Great Lakes Coalition

May 5, 2013

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
SD-131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
SH-125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We, the members of the Healing Our Waters[®]-Great Lakes Coalition, ask that you provide \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in Fiscal Year 2014. The GLRI – and you – have provided the Great Lakes region with much-needed support, and we are seeing on-the-ground results in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. However, while pressures on Congress to balance the U.S. budget will not diminish, neither will the urgent problems facing the Great Lakes. If we cut restoration funds, these serious problems will only get worse and the price we pay will be much higher.

Great Lakes restoration efforts are improving the lives of millions of people and work is continuing on projects throughout the region that address the most urgent problems facing them. These projects are delivering results throughout the region: fish and wildlife are returning to places after decades-long absences; businesses are emerging and thriving on restored waterfronts; and people are fishing, kayaking and swimming in restored waterways.

Specifically:

- At the Ashtabula River in Ohio, a sediment cleanup and habitat restoration project has restored the lower two miles of the river and advanced efforts to get it de-listed as a Great Lakes Area of Concern. The project has improved water quality and deepened the river channel, making the lower Ashtabula suitable again for maritime commerce, fishing, and recreation boating.
- The Grand Calumet River, which flows through a heavily industrialized area south of Chicago, was for years considered America's most polluted river. Thanks to a major cleanup, a large wetland was restored and more than 575,000 cubic yards of toxic mud were removed from the Lake Michigan tributary. The restoration project addressed pollution that led to fish consumption advisories, destroyed wildlife habitat, and an array of other environmental problems.
- At Clear Creek in Freedom, New York, excess stream erosion and sediment, in-stream barriers, elevated water temperatures, and competition from invasive fish restricted brook trout to a few tributaries in the watershed. A Great Lakes Restoration Initiative project restored 1,200 linear feet of in-stream habitat and re-established fish passage over a sheet-pile grade control structure, reconnecting six miles of prime trout habitat.

More stories on the nearly 1,500 GLRI-funded projects currently underway can be found at <http://healthylakes.org/successes/restoration-success-stories/>.

Investments in Great Lakes restoration also create short-term jobs and lead to long-term economic benefits for the Great Lakes states and the country. A Brookings Institution report shows that every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration generates \$2 in return, making Great Lakes restoration one of the best investments on the dollar in the federal budget. More recent research from Grand Valley State University suggests that the return for certain projects may be closer to 6-to-1. The University of Michigan has also demonstrated that over 1.5 million jobs are connected to Great Lakes, accounting for more than \$60 billion in wages annually. We have also seen jobs being created by our nation's efforts to clean up the Great Lakes and restore fish and wildlife habitat. These jobs include wetland scientists, electricians, engineers, landscape architects, plumbers, truck drivers and many others.

However, there is still much work that needs to be done. Aging sewers, invasive species, and toxic pollutants are just a few of the pervasive threats that impact the region, endangering human and wildlife health, lowering property values, and hurting the region's economy. Cutting funding will slow restoration efforts, allowing problems to get worse and more expensive to solve. Ultimately, cutting spending on the Great Lakes won't save money—it will cost the nation more. As the source of drinking water for 30 million people, the nation cannot afford to stop protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

We appreciate the support for Great Lakes restoration in recent years and urge continued support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which is critically important to the sustainability and economic vitality of the Great Lakes and the surrounding eight-state region. If you have any questions, please contact Chad Lord, policy director of the Healing Our Waters[®]-Great Lakes Coalition at (202) 454-3385 or clord@npca.org.

Sincerely,

Joel Brammeier
President & CEO
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Katie Rousseau
Associate Director, Clean Water Programs
American Rivers

Erin Crotty
Executive Director
Audubon New York

Mike Daulton
VP, Government Relations
Audubon Ohio

Loren H. Smith
Executive Director
Buffalo Audubon Society

Jill Spisiak Jedlicka
Executive Director and Riverkeeper
Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper

Matt Misicka
Chair, Ohio Advisory Committee
Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance

Scott Popplewell
President
Central Ohio Anglers & Hunters Club

Mary Smith
Communications Coordinator
Church Women United in New York State

Brian Smith
Program & Communications Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Deanna White
State Director
Clean Water Action – Minnesota

Susan Harley
Michigan Policy Director
Clean Water Action Michigan

Melissa Malott
Water Program Director
Clean Wisconsin

Anne M. Vaara
Executive Director
Clinton River Watershed Council

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director, Great Lakes/Atlantic Region
Ducks Unlimited

Tracey Easthope
Director, Environmental Health Project
Ecology Center

Suzanne Moynihan
Director
Education Dreams for a Green Era

Kathryn Hanratty
Owner
Enviroscapes Landscape Design

Jeffrey D. Fullmer
Watershed and Regulatory Services Coordinator
FABCO Industries Inc.

Jill Ryan
Executive Director
Freshwater Future

Mike Strigel
Executive Director
Gathering Waters Conservancy

June Summers
President
Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Joy Mulinex
Director
Great Lakes States Land Conservancy Coalition

John Jackson
Director, Water Programs
Great Lakes United

Vickie Hennessy
President
Green Environmental Coalition

Laura Rubin
Executive Director
Huron River Watershed Council

Larry Dolphin
President, MN Division
Izaak Walton League

John Crampton
President, Bloomington, MN Bush Lake Chapter
Izaak Walton League

Robert Stegmier
Conservation Chair, Dwight Lydell Chapter
Izaak Walton league of America

John Sturgis
President, Michigan Division
Izaak Walton league of America

Jill Crafton
Chair - Great Lakes Committee
Izaak Walton League of America

Scott Kovarovics
Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.

Robert T. Heath
Professor Emeritus
Kent State University

Rick Unger
President
Lake Erie Charter Boat Association

Sandy Bihn
Executive Director
Lake Erie Waterkeeper Inc.

Lisa Wozniak
Executive Director
Michigan League of Conservation Voters

John A. Caretti
President
Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers
Association

Erin McDonough
Executive Director
Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Cheryl Nenn
Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Steve Morse
Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

John P. Lenczewski
Executive Director
Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Kenneth A. Krieger
Director
National Center for Water Quality Research

Lynn McClure
Midwest Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Andy Buchsbaum
Regional Executive Director
National Wildlife Federation

Melinda Hughes-Wert
President
Nature Abounds

Marc Hudon
Chair, Water commission
Nature Quebec

Bob Townsend
Conservation Director
Ohio B.A.S.S. Nation

Kristy Meyer, M.S.
Managing Director, Agricultural, Health &
Clean Water Programs
Ohio Environmental Council

Don Hollister
Executive Director
Ohio League of Conservation Voters

Melinda Huntley
Executive Director
Ohio Travel Association

Ray Stewart
President
Ohio Wetlands Association

Ben Wickerham
Michigan Regional Representative
Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Jim Inglis
Governmental Affairs Representative
Quail Forever/Pheasants Forever

Irene Senn
Coordinator
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes

Denny Caneff
Executive Director
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Todd L. Ambs
President
River Network

Pat Allen
Member
Rogue River Watershed Council

LeRoger Lind
President
Save Lake Superior Association

Nicole Barker
Executive Director
Save the Dunes

Lee Willbanks
Executive Director
Save The River, Upper St. Lawrence
Riverkeeper

Martha Marsh
President
Shaker Lakes Garden Club

Melissa Damaschke
Great Lakes Program Director
Sierra Club

Lynda Schneekloth
Chair
Sierra Club Niagara Group

Julene Boe
Executive Director
St. Louis River Alliance

Lisa Brush
Executive Director
The Stewardship Network

Dr. Carol Stepien
Director of the Lake Erie Research Center
The University of Toledo

Andy Knott
Executive Director
The Watershed Center ~ Grand Traverse Bay

Ellen Satterlee
CEO
The Wege Foundation

Jennifer McKay
Policy Specialist
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Nichol De Mol
Rogue River Home Rivers Initiative Project
Manager
Trout Unlimited

Nancy Hudson
Secretary and Treasurer
UP Bear Houndsmen Association

Dendra J. Best
Executive Director
Wastewater Education

Tracy Hames
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wetlands Association

George Meyer
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation