



Great Lakes Commission



Healing Our Waters
Great Lakes Coalition



Great Lakes Fishery Commission



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority



Council of Great Lakes Industries



Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition

September 5, 2013

Dear Member of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation:

We urge you to provide \$300 million in FY 2014 for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and to maintain funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund at its current level. The Great Lakes states, communities, tribes, conservation organizations, and business and industry are united in supporting these vital and successful efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes, the source of drinking water for over 30 million people.

The region is implementing a comprehensive strategy to protect and restore the Great Lakes. However, there is still much work that needs to be done. Aging sewers, invasive species, and toxic pollutants are just a few of the persistent threats that impact the region, endangering human and wildlife health, lowering property values and hurting the region's economy. Cutting funding now will only slow restoration efforts, allowing problems to get worse and more expensive to solve.

The GLRI is improving the lives of millions of people by addressing the most serious problems facing the Great Lakes through implementation of over 1,500 on-the-ground restoration projects throughout the eight-state region. These projects are cleaning up degraded Areas of Concern, halting Asian carp and other invasive species, and preventing polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms. Continued funding will build on the investments underway and help our region "get the job done."

The GLRI does not address aging sewers that led to nearly 20 billion gallons of sewage being discharged into the Great Lakes in 2011, closing beaches, threatening public health and damaging local economies. Therefore, Congress must also support the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF), which communities depend on for low-interest loans to implement costly wastewater infrastructure projects. Based on a fixed formula, maintaining level funding for the Clean Water SRF will provide approximately \$500 million for the eight Great Lakes states in 2014.

Restoring the Great Lakes is a wise investment that creates jobs, stimulates economic development and protects freshwater resources on which millions depend. The lakes currently generate over 1.5 million jobs and \$60 billion in wages annually, and provide the foundation for a \$30 billion tourism economy. Looking to the future, the Brookings Institution has projected that fully implementing our Great Lakes restoration strategy will generate over \$50 billion in long-term economic benefits. The lakes are an invaluable resource worth restoring and protecting, and the GLRI and Clean Water SRF are critical to our collective efforts toward this end.

Again, we urge you to show your support for the Great Lakes by providing \$300 million for the GLRI in FY 2014 and maintaining level funding for the Clean Water SRF, both of which are critically important to sustaining the environmental and economic vitality of the Great Lakes and the surrounding eight-state region.

Sincerely,

Tim Eder
Executive Director
Great Lakes Commission

Todd Ambs
Director
Healing Our Waters-
Great Lakes Coalition

Michael Hansen
Chair
Great Lakes
Fishery Commission

Dave Ullrich
Executive Director
Great Lakes and
St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Jane A. TenEyck
Executive Director
Chippewa Ottawa
Resource Authority

Kathryn A. Buckner
President
Council of
Great Lakes Industries

Ed Wolking, Jr.
Great Lakes
Metro Chambers
Coalition