



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham:

As Senators from Great Lakes states, we are writing to express our support for two programs administered by the State Department that are important to the Great Lakes region. Specifically, we request that the following programs be supported in the fiscal year 2015 (FY2015) State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

- **We urge the Committee to provide robust support for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission within the International Fisheries Commission account.**

The Great Lakes are home to an estimated 180 species of native fish, which supports a fishery worth over \$7 billion. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission plays an important role in coordinating fishery management and research across state, provincial, and tribal agencies. The ongoing work by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to combat and control the spread of invasive species, especially the aggressive sea lamprey, is integral to the health and well-being of the Great Lakes fishery. Without the continued efforts by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Great Lakes would experience serious declines in fishery populations at a devastating cost to the regional economy.

- **We urge you to provide continued support for the International Joint Commission (IJC), which receives funding in the American Sections, International Commissions account.**

The IJC helps the U.S. and Canada manage the shared waters that are located along or flow across the border between the U.S. and Canada. Established under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, the IJC serves as a crucial interface between the two countries for policy development and transboundary conflict resolution. In 2012, the U.S. and Canada amended the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to strengthen the two countries' coordinated efforts to tackle issues such as invasive species, toxic substances, lake levels, water and air quality, and pollution prevention. Under this agreement, the IJC plays a central role in analyzing and sharing information between the U.S. and Canada to help carry out the agreement. Continued support for

the IJC and its important intermediary role is critical to ensure the proper, effective management of the Great Lakes' basin.

We appreciate your consideration of our requests for the Great Lakes region. If you have any questions, please feel free to have your staff contact Alice Yates (Senator Levin, 202-224-2683) or Sarah Walter (Senator Kirk, 202-224-2854).

Sincerely,

Mark Kirk, Co-Chair
United States Senator

Carl Levin, Co-Chair
United States Senator

