



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

July 30, 2015

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader McConnell:

We are writing to ask you to support moving legislation authorizing the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative** this year. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate by Rep. David Joyce (H.R. 223) and Senators Mark Kirk and Tammy Baldwin (S. 1024/S. 504). Rep. Joyce's bill was passed by the House late last year under unanimous consent. The GLRI is producing important results for the eight-state Great Lakes region and **authorizing the program is a top priority for the Great Lakes states, local communities, tribes, conservation organizations, and business and industry.**

The House and Senate legislation provides formal authorization for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), an innovative regional restoration program for the Great Lakes that is cleaning up degraded "toxic hotspots," halting Asian carp and other invasive species, and preventing polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms. It will provide a solid legislative platform to ensure our region continues to work together successfully to implement a science-based and outcomes-focused plan of action for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes as a natural treasure and vital economic asset for our region.

The bills direct U.S. EPA to collaborate with the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and state and local partners to select the best combination of projects to protect and restore the Great Lakes. They focus on restoration projects that can be implemented quickly, that will achieve environmental outcomes outlined in the new Great Lakes Action Plan and Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and that leverage other funding.

Passing legislation now will clarify the focus and accountability of our restoration efforts and ensure the program continues to achieve effective results. Restoring the Great Lakes creates jobs, stimulates economic development, and protects fresh drinking water for 30 million people. The lakes currently generate more than 1.5 million jobs and \$60 billion in wages annually, and provide the foundation for a \$30 billion tourism economy. **Clearly, the Great Lakes are an invaluable resource worth restoring and protecting, and this legislation is critical to sustaining our collective efforts toward this end. We urge you to support passage of this legislation in the current session of Congress.**

Sincerely,

Tim Eder
Executive Director
Great Lakes
Commission

Todd Ambs
Director
Healing Our Waters-
Great Lakes Coalition

William Taylor
Chair, U.S. Section
Great Lakes
Fishery Commission

David A. 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.
Executive Director
Great Lakes
Metro Chambers Coalition