



Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

August 30, 2016

Dear Great Lakes Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, we ask you to cosponsor two important bills that help protect and restore the Great Lakes.

The first bill is H.R. 4595/S. 2569, the Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act of 2016. Introduced by Rep. Mike Quigley and Sen. Gary Peters, the Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act ends piecemeal funding for the U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center. Instead, the bill provides the Science Center with the dedicated authorization it needs to conduct critical research and support for the Great Lakes fishery. Up to now Great Lakes fishery research has been funded out of the Department of the Interior's USGS base appropriations. Without explicit legislative authority, reliable funding for the Science Center is at risk. The Science Center maintains staff and field stations in five of the eight Great Lakes states (New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin), owns and operates five large fishery research vessels (one on each lake), and is the only federal agency that conducts lake-wide fisheries science assessments on each of the Great Lakes—assessments that are used by the states to support wise fishery management decisions.

The second bill is H.R. 5765/S. 2949, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2016. This bill, introduced by Rep. Debbie Dingell (with Reps. Candace Miller and Darin LaHood) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (with Sens. Mark Kirk, Debbie Stabenow, and Rob Portman), re-authorizes an important Great Lakes program designed to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat throughout the Great Lakes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish and Wildlife Restoration program helps the region's states, tribes and non-governmental organizations focus resources and attention on restoring the fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes. It has a 23-year track record of success funding 148 projects. It has provided \$22.8 million in federal funding matched by \$127.4 million in non-federal support. This collaborative conservation program delivers on-the-ground results. The Dingell/Klobuchar bill reauthorizes the program for another five years while making changes to expand the type of match that can be used to undertake projects.

Both bills, along with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015 (H.R. 223/S. 1024), create a package of Great Lakes bills that provide flexibility and accountability in our region's effort to protect and restore the source of drinking water for over 30 million people. We ask you to cosponsor these bills and support passing them this year.

Please contact Chad Lord, our coalition's policy director, at (202) 454-3385 or clord@npsca.org with questions.

Sincerely,


Mike Carlson
Co-chair


Joy Mulinex
Co-chair


Mike Shriberg
Co-chair