



February 8, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the member and partner organizations of the Healing Our Waters[®]-Great Lakes Coalition, ask that as you make final funding decisions for fiscal year 2011 you provide \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Although we are seeing results from restoration efforts, there is still so much work to do to address the problems facing the Great Lakes—which provides drinking water to more than 35 million people. The longer we wait, the harder and more expensive solving these problems becomes.

Great Lakes restoration efforts funded by the federal government are improving the lives of millions of Americans in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These efforts are cleaning up drinking water flowing to millions of homes and thousands of industries, are updating municipal sewage facilities to protect drinking water for people for decades to come, and are improving infrastructure important for future economic growth. Efforts are also helping prevent polluted run-off and cleaning up pollution to keep beaches open, creating good-paying jobs in engineering and manufacturing to clean up toxic hot spots and install new sewage treatment facilities; and employing specialists restoring wetlands and Midwesterners working in the fishing and tourism industries.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is a solid economic and environmental investment.

Restoring the Lakes produces \$2 for every \$1 we invest. Restoration projects create good-paying jobs now, from hydrologists to engineers, landscape architects to truck drivers and more, while laying the foundation for long-term prosperity. Restoration projects, in short, deliver results. After cleaning up toxic sediment in a Milwaukee, Wis. river, a small business was able to grow because the clean water drew more people to the riverfront. City leaders in Frankenmuth, Mich., cheered on the completion of a wetland restoration project at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge because they understood its importance to tourism in their region and state. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is benefitting people, communities and businesses. By cleaning up drinking water, putting people to work and improving the quality of life for millions of people, Great lakes restoration may be the best return on the federal dollar in the budget.

However, there is still much work that needs to be done – more opportunities towards healthy lakes and healthy lives – and to create thousands more jobs. Aging sewers dump billions of gallons of sewage into the Lakes, closing beaches and threatening our health. Invasive species such as zebra mussel and sea lamprey are harming the food web and commercial and sport fisheries—while new threats like the Asian carp continue to appear. Toxic pollutants remain in the mud along Great Lakes rivers and harbors of major cities throughout the region, posing risks to human health and wildlife and pushing down property values. There is a backlog of projects that are ready-to-go. We must continue efforts to modernize sewage treatment, clean up polluted harbors, restore wetlands and prevent unwanted, new species from entering the Lakes. Each of these steps is essential if we are to restore the Lakes, revive the economy, and restore the vital center of our country.

The bottom line is if we wait and allow restoration efforts to stall, these problems will only get worse and the price we pay will ultimately be higher. Cutting back on our commitment will cost the region the

opportunity to create hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania; will worsen existing threats while not preparing for new and emerging ones; will continue to put public health at risk and erode the quality of life of millions of people; and will deter workers and businesses from moving and staying in the region.

Again, we ask that you make the economic and environmental restoration of the Great Lakes a top priority and demonstrate that support through funding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at the President's requested \$300 million level for the current fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Regional Organizations

Joel Brammeier
President and CEO
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Kathryn Swartz
Associate Director
American Rivers

Jennifer Browning
Executive Director
Biodiversity Project

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director
Ducks Unlimited

Jill Ryan
Executive Director
Freshwater Future

Nick Schroeck
Executive Director
Great Lakes Environmental Law Center

Derek Stack
Executive Director
Great Lakes United

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

Erin Heskett
Midwest Director
Land Trust Alliance

Lynn McClure
Midwest Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Andy Buchsbaum
Regional Executive Director
Great Lakes Regional Center
National Wildlife Federation

Henry L. Henderson
Midwest Program Director
Natural Resources Defense Council

Emily Green
Great Lakes Program Director
Sierra Club

Illinois Organizations

Arnie Leder
Council Representative
Illinois Trout Unlimited

Ted Beattie
President and CEO
John G. Shedd Aquarium

Glynnis Collins
Executive Director
Prairie Rivers Network

Max Muller
Program Director
Environment Illinois

Indiana Organizations

Peter Avis, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Biology
Northwest Indiana Restoration Monitoring Inventory
Indiana University Northwest

Nicole Kamins
Executive Director
Save the Dunes

Michigan Organizations

Cyndi Roper
Michigan Director
Clean Water Action

Tracey Easthope, MPH
Director, Environmental Health Project
Ecology Center

Rachel Kuntzsch
Executive Director
Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation
Policy

Gary Wager
Executive Director
Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition

Suzanne Dixon
Board Secretary
Kalamazoo River Sturgeon for Tomorrow

Lisa Wozniak
Executive Director
Michigan League of Conservation Voters

Erin McDonough
Executive Director
Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Dennis Fijalkowski
Executive Director
Michigan Wildlife Conservancy

Irene Senn
Coordinator
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes

Melissa Damaschke
Great Lakes Program Organizer
Sierra Club

Andy Knott
Executive Director
The Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay

Gail Gruenwald
Executive Director
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Dendra J. Best
Executive Director
Wastewater Education

Minnesota Organizations

Sean Gosiewski
Executive Director
Alliance for Sustainability

Jerry Bahls
President
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Deanna White
State Director
Clean Water Action – Minnesota

Jane Cleave
President
Duluth Audubon Society

Kristen Larsen
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest

Rolf Nordstrom
Committee Chair
Minnesota Division
Izaak Walton League of America

Jeff Brand
President
Mankato Area Environmentalists

Scott Strand
Executive Director
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Thomas Bell
President
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

John Lenczewski
Executive Director
Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Le Roger Lind
Save Lake Superior Association

Julene Boe
Executive Director
St. Louis River Alliance

New York Organizations

Albert E. Caccese
Executive Director
Audubon New York

William Hudson
Executive Director
Buffalo Audubon Society

Adrienne Esposito
Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

June Summers
President
Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Patrick DiNicola
Treasurer
Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Association

Jim Melius
Administrator
NYS Laborers Tri Funds

Gary Botzek
Executive Director
Minnesota Conservation Federation

Kris Larson
Executive Director
Minnesota Land Trust

Lois Norrgard
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Margaret Levin
State Director
North Star Chapter - Sierra Club

Fran Sauer
President
Southeastern Minnesotans for Environmental
Protection

Dave Glenn
Interim Executive Director
The Minnesota Project

Wayne D. Howard
Great Lakes Committee Chair
Atlantic Chapter - Sierra Club

Julie Barrett O'Neill, Esq.
RIVERKEEPER and Executive Director
Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER

Katherine Nadeau
Water & Natural Resources Program Director
Environmental Advocates of New York

Les Monostory
National Director
New York State Division
Izaak Walton League of America

Gregory Boyer
Professor and Director
New York Great Lakes Research Consortium

Jennifer Caddick
Executive Director
Save the River

Phyllis Tierney, SSJ
Global Environment Committee
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester

Vincent Agnello
Executive Secretary
Niagara Watershed Alliance

Ohio Organizations

Ray Stewart
President and Director of Communications
Friends of Wetlands

Sandy Bihn
Waterkeeper Director
Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association

David Wright
Outreach & Audience Development/Senior
Naturalist
Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

Keith Dimoff
Executive Director
Ohio Environmental Council

Kristina Patterson
Executive Director
Partners For Clean Streams, Inc.

Anne Ginn
President
Shaker Lakes Garden Club

Pennsylvania Organizations

Melinda Hughes-Wert
President
Nature Abounds

Wisconsin Organizations

Amber Meyer Smith
Program Director
Clean Wisconsin

Michael Strigel
Executive Director
Gathering Waters Conservancy

Cheryl Nenn
Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Denny Caneff
Executive Director
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Canadian Organizations

Marc Hudon
St-Lawrence/Great Lakes Program Director
Nature Quebec