



September 18th, 2019

The Honorable «FName» «LName»
«Office»
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator «LName»:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters – Great Lakes Coalition and our over 160 member organizations, we thank you for introducing S. 2295, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019. Your leadership and support for the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is essential to the region’s economy, environment, and public health. You’re ensuring that the bipartisan support and the broad benefits of the GLRI are clear to all and worth expanding to protect the drinking water and quality of life of more than 30 million Americans.

As you know, the GLRI has allowed the 8-state region to undertake one of the world’s largest freshwater ecosystem restoration projects, achieving tremendous results and seeing economic returns of more than 3 to 1 across the region. However, there is still much work to be done. Two-thirds of impairments remain untreated across 19 AOCs, placing the health of communities at risk. Drinking water and coastal economies remain under threat from harmful algal blooms that have shut down entire water systems; as was seen in Toledo, Ohio in 2014. Invasive species, like Asian Carp, are knocking at the door of the lakes and threaten a \$7 billion fishery. Moreover, emerging contaminants and a changing climate continue to exacerbate the challenges we face, many of which disproportionately impact people that have historically borne the brunt of environmental injustice. This underscores the urgency for the GLRI to address these growing threats and we look forward to working with you to find ways to ensure restoration investments lead to equitable outcomes for everyone in the region.

The GLRI has been an environmental and economic success, but much work remains. The region stands ready to continue this important federal partnership and ensure all benefit from and enjoy these investments in restoration and protection. This bill is an important step in facing these challenges and we thank you for your leadership and support! Please do not hesitate to contact Chad Lord, our coalition’s policy director, if you have any questions. He can be reached at (202) 454-3385 or clord@npca.org. We look forward to working with you as the bill moves forward.

Sincerely,

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