June 21, 2021

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition and 93 of our member organizations, we write to urge you support full funding for the Great Lakes Restoration at $375 million in the Fiscal Year 2022 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. We are grateful for the much-needed support the region has received. We are seeing on-the-ground results because of the investments in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The GLRI is driving restoration efforts that are improving the lives of millions of people with work underway or completed on more than 5,400 restoration projects throughout the region. These projects are benefiting communities by cleaning up the source of drinking water for over 30 million Americans. Because of GLRI investments, we are seeing impressive results:

- Four Areas of Concern – Presque Isle, Pa.; Deer Lake, Mich.; White Lake, Mich.; and Lower Menominee River, Mich. & Wisc. – have been delisted since the GLRI began. The management actions necessary to delist 10 additional AOCs have also been completed. In the previous two decades before the GLRI, only one AOC had been cleaned up.

- 91 beneficial use impairments (BUIs) were addressed in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin under the GLRI, more than nine times the total number of BUIs removed in the preceding 22 years.

- Combined with other funding, farmers have implemented nutrient management actions on nearly 2 million acres of rural lands through 2017 to reduce erosion and farm runoff that feeds toxic algal outbreaks. GLRI’s supplemental funding is helping increase farmland under conservation around Western Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, and Green Bay, reducing projected phosphorus runoff by over 1.5 million pounds.
• Over 5,400 river miles have been cleared of dams and barriers resulting in fish swimming into stretches of river where they have been absent for decades.

Investments in Great Lakes restoration create jobs and lead to long-term economic benefits. It is estimated that for every $1 the GLRI invested through 2016 to clean up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), control invasive species, restore wildlife habitat, protect wetlands, and reduce harmful algae the investment will produce more than $3 in additional economic activity regionwide through 2036. The GLRI is revitalizing our waterfronts and leading a resurgence in water-based outdoor recreation, increasing tourism across the region.

Still much work needs to be done. Toxic pollutants, invasive species, deteriorating habitats, and unsafe waters threaten the region, endangering human and wildlife health, lowering property values, and hurting the region’s economy. 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. With the economic downturn hamstringing community investment and exposing the unaffordability of water for so many families, it is critical that Congress provide robust funding through grants in the year ahead. Slowing progress and allowing these problems to get worse will only put our communities at risk and make them more expensive to solve.

As the source of drinking water for over 30 million Americans and the heart of our regional economy, the nation cannot afford to stop protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. The region stands ready to continue this important federal partnership, ensuring that all benefit from and enjoy these investments in restoration and protection. If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact our coalition’s policy director, Chad Lord, at 202-454-3385 or clord@npca.org.

Sincerely,

Don Jodrey
Director of Federal Relations
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Sandy Morrissey
President
Bronx River - Sound Shore Audubon Society

Destinee Henton
Associate Director, Clean Water Supply
American Rivers

Jill Jedlicka
Executive Director
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Connor Bevan
Inland Fisheries Policy Manager
American Sportfishing Association

Lisa Curtis
President
Central Westchester Audubon

Marnie Urso
Senior Policy Director
Audubon Great Lakes

Jim & Marie Hoyt
Chemung Valley Audubon

Erin McGrath
Policy Manager
Audubon New York

Brian Smith
Associate Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Sister Sheila Stone
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart Earth Committee

Ivan J Jack Jr.
Headwaters chapter IWLA president
Headwaters Chapter Izaak Walton League

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSps
Justice and Peace Coordinator
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC

Frances Greenberg
President
Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester

Brad Jensen
Executive Director
Huron Pines

Rebecca Esselman
Executive Director
Huron River Watershed Council

Barbara Beesley
Outreach Coordinator
IHM Justice, Peace & Sustainability Office

Dean Farr
Conservation Advocate
Illinois Division of the Izaak Walton League

Emily Wood
Executive Director
Indiana Wildlife Federation

Jill Crafton
MN Division National Director
IWLA MN Division

Robert Stegmier
Retired National Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Keith Halper
Indiana Division President
Izaak Walton League of America

Rick Graham
National Great Lakes Committee Chairman
Izaak Walton League of America

Elaine Graham
Ohio Division President
Izaak Walton League of America - Ohio Division

Victor Putman
Chair, New York Citizens Advisory Committee
Lake Champlain Basin Program

Elizabeth Joy Guscott-Mueller
President
League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region

Allison Haut
President
League of Women Voters of Illinois

Linda Hanson and Barbara Schilling
Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters of Indiana

Christina Schlitt
LWV Michigan President
League of Women Voters of Michigan

Kimberly Redigan
Vice-Chair
Michigan Coalition for Human Rights

Randy Block
Director
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network (MUUSJN)
Maureen Taylor
State Chairperson
Michigan Welfare Rights Organization

Cheryl Nenn
Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Brenda Coley
Co-Executive Director
Milwaukee Water Commons

Steve Morse
Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Caitlin Wall
Water Policy Manager
National Audubon Society

Lynn McClure
Senior Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Marc Smith
Policy Director
National Wildlife Federation

Kathryn Heintz
Executive Director
New York City Audubon Society

Larry Charette
Chairman
New York State Council of Trout Unlimited

Leslie G. Monostory
President
New York State Division, Izaak Walton League of America

Larry Federman
President
Northern Catskills Audubon Society

Matt Misicka
Executive Director
Ohio Conservation Federation

Pete Bucher
Managing Director of Water Policy
Ohio Environmental Council

Mark Dilley
President
Ohio Wetlands Association

Maryanne Adams
Conservation Chair
Onondaga Audubon

John Detisch
President
PA Division of Izaak Walton League of America

Kristina Patterson
Executive Director
Partners for Clean Streams, Inc.

Mary Ellen Howard
President
People's Water Board Coalition

Irene Senn
Coordinator
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes

Allison Werner
Executive Director
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Lori Andresen
President
Save Our Sky Blue Waters

Katie Hobgood
Program Director
Save the Dunes
Tim Dewane  
JPIC Director  
School Sisters of Notre Dame - CP JPIC Office

Erma Leaphart  
Great Lakes Organizer  
Sierra Club

Karen Donahue, RSM  
Justice Team Member  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team

Jill Haberman  
Justice and Peace Animator  
Sisters of St. Francis Assisi

Phyllis Tierney  
Coordinator, Rochester SSJ Justice & Peace Office  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester Justice & Care for Creation Committee

Brien Weiner  
President  
South Shore Audubon Society

Fai Foen  
Director of Green Infrastructure  
The Greening of Detroit

Theresa Landrum  
Community organizer  
The Original United Citizens of Southwest Detroit

Christine Crissman  
Executive Director  
The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay

Jennifer McKay  
Policy Director  
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Paul Miller  
Region 6 VP  
NYS Council of Trout Unlimited

Monica. Lewis-Patrick  
President & CEO  
We the People of Detroit

Bill Wood  
Executive Director  
West Michigan Environmental Action Council Education Foundation

John Whitney  
Chairperson  
Western New York Environmental Alliance

Jajean Rose-Burney  
Deputy Executive Director  
Western New York Land Conservancy

Joseph Morgan  
Vice President  
Western NY Trout Unlimited

Mike Kuhr  
State Council Chair  
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Deborah Stewart Anderson  
Coordinator  
Zero Waste Detroit