



GREAT LAKES
LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

April 7, 2015

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Appropriations Committee
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

As members of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus from the Great Lakes states, we are writing to express our very strong support for the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The Great Lakes Legislative Caucus is a nonpartisan, binational organization of state and provincial legislators from the eight states and two Canadian provinces that share the Great Lakes. As state legislators from the Great Lakes region, we are keenly aware of the ecological and economic importance of the Great Lakes to our states. They are a source of drinking water for nearly 40 million people in two nations. According to the 2011 "Great Lakes Jobs Report," over 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the lakes, generating \$62 billion annually in wages in manufacturing, tourism, shipping, and other industries. Our Great Lakes are both a natural wonder and a vital economic engine that deserve our unwavering support.

The GLRI enables vital work to proceed in cleaning up toxic sites, reducing runoff that contributes to harmful algal blooms, restoring habitat, and preventing and controlling invasive species. To continue this work, we feel very strongly that GLRI funding in the FY 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill should, at a minimum, be maintained at \$300 million consistent with FY 2015 funding. Since its inception in 2010, the GLRI has been responsible for a great deal of progress, perhaps most notably the cleanup of toxic hotspots, or Areas of Concern (AOCs), around the lakes. Our states and local communities benefit directly from the work being funded by the initiative, including several projects that have led to the delisting of Pennsylvania's Presque Isle Bay AOC and the Deer Lake and White Lake AOCs in Michigan. GLRI-funded projects also have led to the completion of cleanup activities at three additional AOCs in Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin, with ten additional projects slated to be completed by 2019. To complete these and other GLRI projects for the benefit of our region's economy and the environment, consistent funding must be maintained.

We also voice our strong support for legislation to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Formal authorization of the GLRI will provide greater coordination and continuity for restoration and protection projects, thereby improving the health of our region's most-

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treasured natural resource. We are very pleased to see that bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate to authorize the GLRI through FY 2020, and that both bills have bipartisan support from members of Congress from the Great Lakes region. By copy of this letter to the Congressional delegations from the Great Lakes states, we encourage their action in support of the GLRI and its authorization.

We appreciate your leadership and your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our position on the GLRI. If you have any questions about this letter or wish to arrange a time to meet, please contact Lisa Janairo at 920.458.5910.

Sincerely,



Representative Cory Mason, Wisconsin
Chair, Great Lakes Legislative Caucus



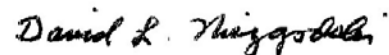
Representative Laura Fine, Illinois



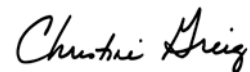
Representative Elaine Nekritz, Illinois



Senator Jim Arnold, Indiana



Representative David Niezgodski, Indiana



Representative Christine Greig, Michigan



Representative Jeff Irwin, Michigan



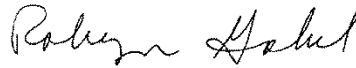
Representative Amanda Price, Michigan



Representative Sarah Roberts, Michigan



Senator Darwin Booher, Michigan
Vice Chair, Great Lakes Legislative Caucus



Representative Robyn Gabel, Illinois



Senator Donne E. Trotter, Illinois



Senator John Broden, Indiana



Senator Tom Casperson, Michigan



Representative Marcia Hovey-Wright,
Michigan



Senator Phil Pavlov, Michigan



Representative Al Pscholka, Michigan



Senator Rebekah Warren, Michigan



Representative Rick Hansen, Minnesota



Senator Ann H. Rest, Minnesota



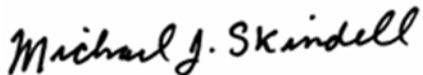
Representative JoAnn Ward, Minnesota



Senator Capri Cafaro, Ohio



Representative John Patterson, Ohio



Senator Michael J. Skindell, Ohio



Representative Peter Barca, Wisconsin



Senator Janet Bewley, Wisconsin



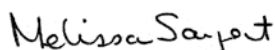
Representative Eric Genrich, Wisconsin



Senator Chris Larson, Wisconsin



Representative Tod Ohnstad, Wisconsin



Representative Melissa Sargent, Wisconsin



Senator Lena C. Taylor, Wisconsin



Representative Joe Mullery, Minnesota



Senator Matt Schmit, Minnesota



Senator Edna Brown, Ohio



Senator Cliff Hite, Ohio



Representative Dan Ramos, Ohio



Representative Curt Sonney, Pennsylvania



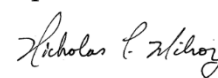
Representative Mandela Barnes, Wisconsin



Representative Dave Considine, Wisconsin

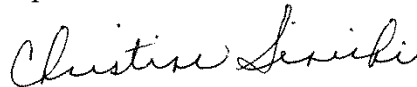


Representative Debra Kolste, Wisconsin



Representative Nick Milroy, Wisconsin

Representative Daniel Riemer, Wisconsin



Representative Christine Sinicki, Wisconsin



Representative JoCasta Zamarripa, Wisconsin