April 3, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you today as members of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus (GLLC), a nonpartisan, binational group of legislators from the eight states and two Canadian provinces that are home to the Great Lakes. We are dismayed at the proposal in your March 16 Budget Blueprint to eliminate the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). This action will significantly damage the economic and environmental well-being of the Great Lakes Region. The GLRI is absolutely critical to maintaining the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes, which provide 84% of North America’s fresh surface water and create millions of family-supporting jobs for Americans and Canadians. As Great Lakes legislators, we urge you to restore the GLRI and to fund the program at $300 million annually as authorized by the 114th Congress in 2016.

The value of the Great Lakes as a resource is dependent upon stopping invasive species from entering the lakes and decimating our native species; addressing the conditions contributing to the growth of harmful algal blooms, which make water unsafe for drinking and swimming; and cleaning up sites contaminated by toxic pollutants from this region’s industrial legacy. Funding under the GLRI is responsible for three polluted sites in Michigan and Pennsylvania being completely restored, while significant progress has been made at another 13 sites in those states as well as Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, New York, and Illinois. These are real, well-documented results of the GLRI. The incredible environmental recovery of the Great Lakes, and the economic benefit to coastal communities that result from this environmental restoration, will not continue without the projects enabled by the GLRI. Simply put, eliminating the GLRI throws the continued economic and environmental viability of the Great Lakes Region into grave jeopardy. It would also undermine the efforts of both Canada and the United States to meet their commitments, as expressed in the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Eliminating the GLRI also will deal a tremendous blow to strong efforts by state and local governments to protect Great Lakes resources and maintain important wildlife habitats. These programs benefit greatly from the strategic planning and resources provided by the GLRI. Many state and local programs may simply cease to function without the coordination and support of the GLRI, which has enjoyed tremendous support across party lines since its inception. In addition to the overwhelmingly negative impacts on the Great Lakes economy and ecosystem, eliminating funding for the GLRI will cause direct and immediate harm to human health in the Great Lakes Region. A workforce that does not have reliable access to clean, safe drinking water cannot hope to thrive or reach its full potential.

Eliminating GLRI funding will cause massive and lasting damage to the economy and environment of the Great Lakes Region. We, the undersigned legislators, urge you to reconsider and reject a course of action that could undo decades of necessary improvements to North America’s most precious natural resource.
Sincerely,

Representative Cory Mason, Wisconsin GLLC Chair

Representative Kelly Burke, Illinois

Representative Robyn Gabel, Illinois

Representative Rita Mayfield, Illinois

Representative Juliana Stratton, Illinois

Senator Karen Tallian, Indiana

Representative B. Patrick Bauer, Indiana

Representative Earl Harris, Indiana

Senator Steve Bieda, Michigan

Senator Ken Horn, Michigan

Senator Rebekah Warren, Michigan

Representative Pam Faris, Michigan

Representative Steve Marino, Michigan

Senator Donne Trotter, Illinois

Representative Laura Fine, Illinois

Representative Sonya Marie Harper, Illinois

Representative Elaine Nekritz, Illinois

Senator Ed Charbonneau, Indiana

Representative John Bartlett, Indiana

Representative Carey Hamilton, Indiana

Representative Matt Pierce, Indiana

Senator Goeff Hansen, Michigan

Senator Phillip Pavlov, Michigan

Senator Dale Zorn, Michigan

Representative Dan Lauwers, Michigan

Representative David Maturen, Michigan
Representative Andy Schor, Michigan

Representative Robert Wittenberg, Michigan

Senator David Senjem, Minnesota

Representative David Bly, Minnesota

Representative Melissa Hortman, Minnesota

Representative Michael Nelson, Minnesota

Representative JoAnn Ward, Minnesota

Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, New York

Senator Kenny Yuko, Ohio

Representative David Leland, Ohio

Representative Michael Sheehy, Ohio

Representative Curtis Sonney, Pennsylvania

Senator Janet Bewley, Wisconsin

Representative Sam Singh, Michigan

Senator Tony Lourey, Minnesota

Senator Erik Simonson, Minnesota

Representative Alice Hausman, Minnesota

Representative Sandra Masin, Minnesota

Representative Jennifer Schultz, Minnesota

Senator Rich Funke, New York

Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, New York

Representative Stephanie Howse, Ohio

Representative John Patterson, Ohio

Representative Kent Smith, Ohio

Mr. Guy Ouellette, Québec

Senator Chris Larson, Wisconsin
Representative Jimmy Anderson, Wisconsin

Representative Peter Barca, Wisconsin

Representative Jill Billings, Wisconsin

Representative Evan Goyke, Wisconsin

Representative Dianne Hesselbein, Wisconsin

Representative Frederick Kessler, Wisconsin

Representative Beth Meyers, Wisconsin

Representative Tod Ohnstad, Wisconsin

Representative Katrina Shankland, Wisconsin

Representative Mark Spreitzer, Wisconsin

Representative Lisa Subeck, Wisconsin

Representative Dana Wachs, Wisconsin

Representative Josh Zepnick, Wisconsin

Representative Joan Ballweg, Wisconsin

Representative Terese Berceau, Wisconsin

Representative Eric Genrich, Wisconsin

Representative Gary Hebl, Wisconsin

Representative Gordon Hintz, Wisconsin

Representative Debra Kolste, Wisconsin

Representative Nick Milroy, Wisconsin

Representative Melissa Sargent, Wisconsin

Representative Christine Sinicki, Wisconsin

Representative Amanda Stuck, Wisconsin

Representative Chris Taylor, Wisconsin

Representative JoCasta Zamarripa, Wisconsin

cc: Congressional delegations from the Great Lakes states