

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to respectfully request that the Administration provide at least \$400 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the current level authorized in law, in the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget.

The Great Lakes are a true national treasure that we must continue to prioritize and protect. These waters—Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior—comprise the largest surface freshwater system in the world, holding nearly 21 percent of the world's fresh water supply and 90 percent of the United States' fresh water supply. The Lakes are an economic driver that support jobs, commerce, agriculture, transportation, and tourism for millions of people across the country. A 2018 report showed that every GLRI dollar spent through 2016 in cleaning up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), controlling invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat, protecting wetlands, and reducing harmful algae will produce more than \$3 in additional economic activity through 2036.¹ Investing in the GLRI will contribute directly to creating or supporting, on average, more than 5,000 jobs per year.

In addition to measurable economic results, the GLRI is producing significant environmental benefits for our region. Over 5,400 river miles have been cleared of dams and other barriers reconnecting fish to important habitat. More than 274 million gallons of untreated runoff and more than 1.5 million pounds of phosphorus, a significant contributor to harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes, have been mitigated and captured through GLRI implemented projects in priority watersheds. Even with the positive results from over 6,000 projects, however, there is still much work to do. Fifteen AOCs are still contaminated with toxic sediment, stunting the development and threatening the health of too many Great Lakes communities.

Now and in the future, the federal government must continue to partner with the region to address the challenges facing the Great Lakes. In the coming year, as the Administration begins to consider the development of GLRI Action Plan IV, we urge the Great Lakes National Program Office to consider how to strengthen the GLRI by revisiting its guiding principles developed under the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy nearly two decades ago.

¹ University of Michigan. 2018. "Socioeconomic Impacts of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative." Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics.

Support for the Great Lakes and GLRI has long seen strong bipartisan support in Congress. Halting or reducing this commitment would reverse years of progress, dramatically reducing the GLRI's impact, and jeopardize the environmental and economic health of the region for generations to come.

To that end, we urge you to continue this vital investment in the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes by including at least \$400 million for the GLRI in the President's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget, which is the current level authorized in law. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Haley Stevens
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
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Gwen Moore
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Peter Meijer
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Brian Higgins
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Pete Stauber
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Joseph Morelle
Member of Congress

John Katko
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Bradley S. Schneider
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Fred Upton
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Bill Foster
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Tim Walberg
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Robin Kelly
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Bryan Steil
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Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman
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Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Lisa McClain
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress