



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

April 26, 2013

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As members of the Great Lakes delegation, we are writing to express our support for programs in the Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency that are essential for protecting human health and preserving fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes region. We ask that you consider the following requests as you work on the Interior appropriations bill for fiscal year 2014 (FY14).

- **We urge the Committee to support the FY14 budget request of \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).**

As national treasures, the Great Lakes are the economic and ecological core of the region. The Great Lakes constitute 95% of the nation's surface freshwater, contain over 200 globally unique animal and plant species, and support a world-class fishery. The Great Lakes also offer tremendous economic benefits supporting more than 1.5 million direct jobs and \$62 billion in annual wages.

The GLRI supports a cooperative inter-agency initiative to protect and restore the integrity of the Great Lakes' ecosystem. Projects are focused on solving regional challenges and achieving measurable results. Continued support is needed in order to address urgent priorities identified in the GLRI Action Plan: (1) cleaning up toxic sediments in areas of concern; (2) preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species; (3) promoting nearshore health by protecting watersheds from polluted run-off; (4) restoring wetlands and other habitats; and (5) tracking progress and working with strategic partners.

The work carried out by the EPA and other agencies through the GLRI is imperative for ensuring the long-term health and prosperity of the Great Lakes' region. We appreciate the Committee's attention to this important request and hope it will receive serious consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to have your staff contact Alice Yates (Senator Levin, 202-224-2683) or Sarah Walter (Senator Kirk, 202-224-2854).

Sincerely,


Mark Kirk, Co-Chair
United States Senator



Carl Levin, Co-Chair
United States Senator


Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator


Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Joe Donnelly
United States Senator


Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator