



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION
GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

April 26, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham:

As Senators from Great Lakes states, we are writing to express our support for two programs run by the State Department that are important to the Great Lakes region. Specifically, we would like to request the following for fiscal year 2014:

- **We urge the Committee to provide robust support for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) within the International Fisheries Commission account.**

The Great Lakes are home to an estimated 180 species of native fish, which supports a world-class fishery worth over \$7 billion. Despite the vast supply of resources and benefits they provide, the Great Lakes face serious challenges, such as the spread of invasive species that threaten the economic and ecological health of the region. The GLFC plays an important role in coordinating fishery management and research across state, provincial, and tribal agencies, focusing on controlling the spread of the invasive sea lamprey species. The Commission's ongoing work to control sea lamprey is integral to the health and well-being of the Great Lakes fishery. Without the continued efforts by the Fishery Commission, the Great Lakes would experience serious declines in fishery populations at a devastating cost to the regional economy.

- **We urge you to provide continued support for the International Joint Commission (IJC), which receives funding in the American Sections, International Commissions account.**

The IJC helps manage the shared resources of the Great Lakes between the United States and Canada, and further serves as a crucial interface between the two countries for policy development and transboundary conflict resolution. In 2012, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, an agreement between the United States and Canada, re-committed the two countries to coordinate efforts on issues such as invasive species, toxic substances, lake levels, water and air quality, and pollution prevention. The agreement requires the IJC to play a central role in analyzing and sharing information between the two countries to help carry out the agreement.

Continued support is needed for the IJC to continue its key coordination role and to effectively ensure the proper management of the Great Lakes' basin.

We appreciate your consideration of our requests for the Great Lakes region. 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
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



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator