March 30, 2017

Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
2205 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
2256 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

We write to respectfully request that you provide $300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the Fiscal Year 2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The Great Lakes are truly a national treasure. The Great Lakes are the largest freshwater system in the world, holding roughly 18 percent of the world's fresh water supply and 90 percent of the United States' fresh water supply. The Lakes are also an economic driver that supports jobs, commerce, agriculture, transportation, and tourism for millions of people across the country.

More than a century of environmental damage has taken a significant toll on the Great Lakes, which the GLRI is helping to correct. Since the initiative was launched in 2010, GLRI funds have been used to support over 3,000 restoration projects to improve water quality, protect and restore native habitat, clean up environmentally-impaired Areas of Concern, fight invasive species, and prevent beach closings.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is showing real and measurable results, but there is still a great deal of work to do. The Great Lakes Basin is vulnerable to various pollutants and invasive species, which threaten the health of the Great Lakes. For example, in 2014 a toxic algal bloom in Lake Erie forced 400,000 residents in the Toledo area to go without home water service for three days. While the GLRI has prioritized monitoring efforts, which help drinking water treatment plant operators and beach managers minimize health impacts associated with these toxic algal blooms, more must be done to better understand and prevent these algal blooms in the future.

The federal government commits significant resources each year to address the challenges the Great Lakes face. In particular, GLRI resources have supplemented agency budgets to fund coordinated efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem, and we must ensure that this important work continues. Halting this commitment would reverse years of progress, dramatically reduce the GLRI’s impact, and jeopardize the environmental and economic health of the region.
To that end, we urge you to continue this vital investment in the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes by including $300 million for the GLRI in the Fiscal Year 2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress
Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress

Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress

Jim Renacci
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress
Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress

Mike Bishop  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Dave Trott  
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress

Tim Walz  
Member of Congress

Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress
Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Chris Collins  
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress

Paul Mitchell  
Member of Congress

Thomas Suozzi  
Member of Congress

Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Steve Olivers  
Member of Congress

Peter J. Roskam  
Member of Congress

John Katko  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

Romey Davis  
Member of Congress