

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 11, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

As members of the Bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force in the House of Representatives, we write to express our strong support for S. 3738, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024, and ask for its consideration by the full House of Representatives before the end of the 118th Congress.

The Great Lakes are an irreplaceable resource and an invaluable economic driver to our communities. These waters – Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, and Lake Superior – constitute the largest system of surface freshwater on Earth, provide drinking water for an estimated 33 million people, and support 25.8 million jobs generating over \$1.3 trillion in wages.¹ Since its inception in 2010, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has served as a catalyst for unprecedented federal agency coordination on one of the largest and most important freshwater ecosystem restoration projects that directly benefits Great Lakes communities.

Year after year, the GLRI continues to receive bipartisan support and has consistently proven to be an economic and environmental success. With more than 7,500 projects underway or completed, the program has resulted in economic returns of more than 3 to 1 across the region and has made tremendous environmental progress.² Now and in the future, the federal government must continue to partner with the region to address the remaining challenges facing the Great Lakes.

As you may know, S. 3738, introduced by Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and J.D. Vance (R-OH), passed the Senate by unanimous consent on Wednesday, December 4, 2024. The legislation, as amended, extends the authorization for GLRI through Fiscal Year 2031 at an annual level of \$475 million. A similar measure in the House was introduced by the Co-Chairs of the Great Lakes Task Force and has the support of 34 bipartisan Members of Congress.

With the Senate taking clear, bipartisan action to unanimously support the reauthorization of GLRI, it is imperative that the House do the same. This is essential to foster a proactive approach

¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office for Coastal Management, “Great Lakes Fast Facts” (September 5, 2024). <https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/great-lakes.html>

² Environmental Protection Agency Office of the Inspector General, “Great Lakes Restoration Documented Most Achievements, but the EPA Could Improve Monitoring and Reporting” (June 3, 2024).

to conservation, which will provide the stability and certainty needed to ensure agencies, local communities, and stakeholders can plan effectively and allocate resources for long-term strategies to benefit the health of the ecosystem. A lapse in consistent authorization would risk reversing years of progress, dramatically reducing GLRI's impact, and jeopardizing the environmental and economic health of the region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and its federally recognized tribes for generations to come.

The GLRI has long seen strong bipartisan support in Congress and is a proven environmental and economic success. We offer our strongest support for this vital legislation and urge you to consider S. 3738 under suspension of the rules at the earliest opportunity before the end of the 118th Congress. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

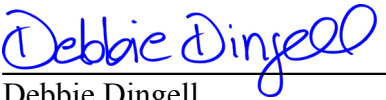
Sincerely,



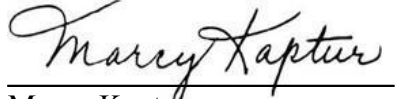
David P. Joyce
Member of Congress



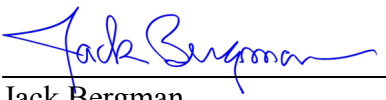
Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



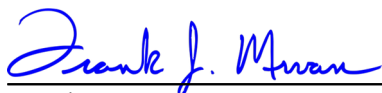
Lisa C. McClain
Member of Congress



John R. Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



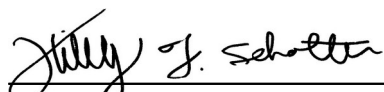
Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



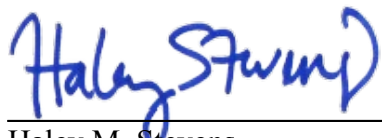
Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



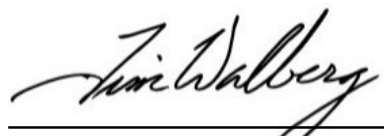
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



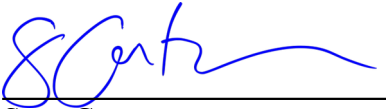
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SCasten", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Sean Casten
Member of Congress