

January 19, 2016

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member, Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: S. 1024, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015

Dear Senators Inhofe and Boxer:

The Council of Great Lakes Industries (CGLI) offers this letter to express support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. CGLI is a binational non-profit organization representing the common policy interests of Canadian and US industrial organizations from the manufacturing, utilities, natural resources, and trade sectors that have investments in the Great Lakes region. The mission of CGLI is to promote the growth and vitality of the region in harmony with its human and natural resources (sustainable development).

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region plays a critical role in supporting the American economy. According to BMO Financial Group, the eight states and two Canadian provinces that make up the region generate nearly one-third of combined U.S. and Canadian economic activity. The region accounts for more than half of all cross-border trade between the US and Canada and 51 million jobs (31% of the workforce of the US and Canada), and its industrial activities-- manufacturing, financial services, automobile production, aerospace, life sciences, food processing, metal-fabricating, commercial fishing, and recreation and tourism, among others-- support vibrant cities and dynamic metropolitan areas. World Business Chicago estimates that, if the region were a country, its GDP would be the third largest in the world.

At the core of the Great Lakes region, of course, are the five Great Lakes themselves. Forty million people rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water (according to NOAA), and millions more value the lakes for providing a wide range of environmental and economic benefits. The lakes are a vital component of the region's economic engine, providing resources needed not only for drinking water but also for energy generation, transportation, and the region's robust recreation and tourism industry. In addition, the lakes provide 20% of the world's supply of fresh surface water, which creates a unique competitive advantage for the region and the country. Put simply, the lakes are a national treasure.

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Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is vital for protecting drinking water supplies, creating and maintaining jobs, stimulating economic development, strengthening waterfront communities, and ensuring the sustainability of the resource for future generations. The lakes have been impacted by historic legacy contamination and continue to face threats from sewage contamination that closes beaches, invasive species that harm outdoor recreation, toxic algae blooms that threaten drinking water supplies and the region's tourism industry, and other stressors. Fully implementing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, which was developed in 2005 by nearly 1500 of the region's stakeholders to address these problems and was projected to generate at least \$50 billion in long-term economic benefits, is vital. Cutting Great Lakes restoration efforts now could reverse the progress that has been made to date and make problems more expensive to solve.

We believe that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015 (S.1024) is a key element in the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. As currently drafted, S. 1024 would provide sustained resources for Great Lakes protection and restoration by authorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$300M per year for the next several years. The GLRI has provided an opportunity for the region to achieve significant progress on "on the ground" restoration, including among other things by cleaning up legacy contamination in areas of concern. We appreciate that the program originated from priorities that regional stakeholders agreed to in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. In short, we support legislation that enables additional restoration activities because we believe restoration is good for the economy.

Please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

COUNCIL OF GREAT LAKES INDUSTRIES



Kathryn A. Buckner, President

Cc: George Kuper, Chairman