



Great Lakes Commission



Healing Our Waters Great Lakes Coalition



Great Lakes Fishery Commission



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority



Council of Great Lakes Industries



Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition

March 17, 2016

Dear Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Pelosi, and Minority Leader Reid:

We are writing to ask you to support consideration of legislation authorizing the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**. Bipartisan legislation sponsored by Rep. David Joyce (H.R. 223) and Senator Mark Kirk (S. 1024) have been approved by committees in both the House and Senate and now await floor consideration. Rep. Joyce’s bill was passed by the House at the end of the last Congress. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is producing important results for the eight-state Great Lakes region and **authorizing the program is a top priority for the Great Lakes states, local communities, tribes, conservation organizations, and business and industry.**

The House and Senate legislation provides formal authorization for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an innovative regional restoration program for the Great Lakes that is cleaning up degraded toxic hotspots, halting Asian carp and other invasive species, and preventing polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms. It provides a solid legislative platform to ensure our region continues to work together successfully to implement a science-based and outcomes-focused plan of action for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes as a natural treasure and vital economic asset for our region.

Passing legislation now will clarify the focus and accountability of our restoration efforts and ensure the program continues to achieve effective results. Restoring the Great Lakes creates jobs, stimulates economic development, and protects fresh drinking water for 30 million people. The lakes currently generate more than 1.5 million jobs and \$60 billion in wages annually, and provide the foundation for a \$30 billion tourism economy. **The Great Lakes are an invaluable resource worth restoring and protecting, and this legislation is critical to sustaining our collective efforts toward this end. We urge you to support passage of this legislation in the current session of Congress.**

Sincerely,

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