

Alliance for the Great Lakes – Audubon New York - Citizens Campaign for the Environment – Freshwater Future – Genesee Valley Audubon Society – Great Lakes Environmental Law Center – Lake Erie Region Conservancy – Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Association – Michigan Wildlife Conservancy – Minnesota Environmental Partnership - National Garden Clubs, Inc. – National Parks Conservation Association – National Wildlife Federation – Nature Abounds – Ohio Environmental Council – Partners for Clean Streams, Inc. – River Alliance of Wisconsin – Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council – The Watershed Center ~ Grand Traverse Bay – Save the River

Dear Representative:

As members of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, we ask that you oppose H.R. 2018, the Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011. Dismantling clean water protections will only undermine the success the Great Lakes region is having in restoring and protecting the Great Lakes.

This bill is a serious, unprecedented attack on some of the fundamental protections for our nation's water. It would eliminate the partnership between the states and the federal government when setting water quality standards for waters as they flow from state to state. It also guts oversight of activities that destroy wetlands or pollute our nation's waters. Congress gave EPA the joint responsibility to ensure that permits allowing activities that dredge or fill rivers, streams or wetlands do not destroy the environment, especially if less damaging alternatives are available. This so-called "404(c) veto" authority is a rarely used backstop to safeguard all waters from only the most destructive and wasteful projects.

Great Lakes restoration efforts are improving the lives of millions of people and work is beginning on over 300 restoration projects throughout the region that will measurably restore the Great Lakes and address the most urgent problems facing them. These projects are cleaning up drinking water flowing to millions of homes and thousands of industries and improving infrastructure important for future economic growth in the eight-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Investments in Great Lakes restoration also create short-term jobs and lead to long-term economic benefits for the Great Lakes states. A Brookings Institution report shows that every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration generates \$2 in return, making Great Lakes restoration one of the best investments of the federal dollar in the budget. Many jobs have been created by efforts to clean up the Great Lakes and restore fish and wildlife habitat. These jobs include wetland scientists, electricians, engineers, landscape architects, plumbers, truck drivers and many others.

The benefits of restoring the Great Lakes cannot be achieved if the fundamental rules protecting our Great Waters, like the Great Lakes, are gutted by this legislation. If Congress amends the Clean Water Act and removes the protections that have helped clean our waters over the last nearly 40 years, our region's job in finishing the restoration efforts that have recently been started will only get harder, leading to higher clean up costs and dirtier water.

We again urge you to oppose this unprecedented attack on clean water and vote against H.R. 2018.

Sincerely,

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