

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies considers FY2019 appropriations requests, we are requesting full funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$300 million. As you are aware, the President's FY2019 budget request cut funding for the GLRI by 90% after proposing to eliminate funding for the program in the FY2018 budget request. We are concerned that these proposed cuts will reverse the progress that has been made to protect and improve the Great Lakes, the world's largest freshwater body, which supplies drinking water to millions of people and contributes billions of dollars to the economy each year.

In December 2016, Congress reauthorized GLRI as part of the Waster Infrastructure Improvements for the Nations Act (P.L. 114-322) for five years at \$300 million. With your help, Congress has consistently fully funded GLRI since its inception in 2010. Most recently, H.R. 1625, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-141), fully funded GLRI despite the President's budget request to eliminate funding for the program.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is the largest investment in the Great Lakes' health, ecosystem, and water quality. Since its inception in 2010, \$1.6 billion has been used to fund over 3,000 projects to combat the greatest threats to the Great Lakes, including invasive species, harmful algal blooms and loss of fish and wildlife habitats. The program has leveraged more than \$475 million in nonfederal dollars from a wide range of partners, including nonprofit organizations, states, communities, educational institutions, and private companies. In targeting Areas of Concern, the program has successfully addressed problems that directly impact the public health and safety including beach closings, restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, dredging restrictions, and problems with drinking water taste, odor and consumption. The Great Lakes provide drinking water for 40 million people, contribute \$10 billion in tourism each year, and support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the region.

We appreciate your past support of the GLRI and look forward to working with you to ensure that the program remains fully funded. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator