



November 14, 2022

Director Shalanda Young,

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition and 67 of our member organizations, we write to urge the Administration fully fund the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at no less than \$425 million in the President's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget request.

The Great Lakes define our region's way of life, serving as the drinking water source for more than 42 million people and providing a rich aquatic habitat supporting a \$7 billion annual fishing industry and Great Lakes recreation that draws millions of tourists who boost the economies of our communities. In short, the Great Lakes are where many millions of people live, work and play.

We applaud the Administration's leadership and commitment to Great Lakes restoration. With the Administration's support, the Great Lakes are set to see a much needed boost in funding over the next 5 years as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests \$1 billion to accelerate the clean-up of dangerous toxic hotspots found across our communities. These resources will supplement GLRI's efforts yielding significant on-the-ground results across Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The GLRI is improving the lives of millions of people and work is underway or completed on more than 6,850 restoration projects throughout the region. These projects are benefiting communities by cleaning up the source of drinking water for over 30 million Americans. Because of GLRI investments, since 2010 we have seen impressive results:

- Five Areas of Concern – Presque Isle, Pa.; Deer Lake, Mich.; White Lake, Mich.; Lower Menominee River, Mich. & Wisc.; and Ashtabula River, OH. – have been delisted since the GLRI began. The management actions necessary to delist 10 additional AOCs have also been completed. In the previous two decades before the GLRI, only one AOC had been cleaned up.
- 103 beneficial use impairments (BUIs) were addressed in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin under the GLRI, ten times the total number of BUIs removed in the preceding 22 years.
- Combined with other funding, farmers have implemented nutrient management actions on over 2 million acres of rural lands reducing erosion and farm runoff that feeds toxic algal outbreaks. GLRI funding is helping increase farmland under conservation to reduce projected phosphorus runoff by over 2 million pounds and developing urban runoff projects that have captured more than 375 million gallons of untreated urban runoff.
- Over 6,000 river miles have been cleared of dams and barriers resulting in fish swimming into stretches of river where they have been absent for decades. More than 460,000 acres of habitat have been protected, restored, or enhanced.

These investments create jobs and lead to long-term economic benefits for the region. It is estimated that for every \$1 the GLRI invested to clean up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), control invasive species, restore wildlife habitat, protect wetlands, and reduce harmful algae more than \$3 in additional economic activity resulted regionwide. The GLRI is revitalizing our waterfronts and leading a resurgence in water-based outdoor recreation, increasing tourism across the region.

However, the Great Lakes still face urgent problems, and much work needs to be done. Dwindling habitat, invasive species, and toxic pollutants threaten the region, endangering public health, wildlife, and hurting the region's economy. Moreover, emerging contaminants and a changing climate continue to exacerbate the challenges we face, many of which disproportionately impact people that have historically borne the brunt of environmental injustice. Allowing these problems to get worse will only put our communities at risk and make them more expensive to solve.

We urge the Administration continue to prioritize the Great Lakes region, ensuring supplemental funds are quickly and equitably distributed to the communities most in need and support EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office staffing needs. Moreover, the Administration must ensure supplemental funds do not replace the GLRI's base funding. We call on the Biden Administration to continue the federal commitment to the region by requesting full funding for the GLRI at \$425 million in FY2024 as called for in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019.

As the source of drinking water for over 42 million people and the heart of our regional economy, the nation cannot afford to stop protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. The region stands ready to continue this important federal partnership, ensuring that all benefit from and enjoy these investments in restoration and protection.

If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact our Coalition's Senior Legislative Analyst, Alexis Lopez-Cepero, at alopez-cepero@npca.org.

Sincerely,

Don Jodrey
Director of Federal Relations
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Richard Cosgrove
President
Art Flick Trout Unlimited

Marnie Urso
Senior Director, Policy
Audubon Great Lakes

Erin McGrath
Senior Policy Manager
Audubon New York

Jill Jedlicka
Executive Director
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Ted Hoover
President
Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Lisa Curtis
President
Central Westchester Audubon Society

Candis Reed
CVAS Corresponding secretary
Chemung Valley Audubon Society

Brian Smith
Associate Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Erik Kanter
Government Relations Director
Clean Wisconsin

Kyle Rorah
Regional Director of Public Policy
Ducks Unlimited

Rob Hayes
Director of Clean Water
Environmental Advocates NY

Howard Learner
Executive Director
Environmental Law & Policy Center

Liz Kirkwood
Executive Director
For Love of Water (FLOW)

Marie McCormick
Executive Director
Friends of the Rouge

Juliette King McAvoy and Bob Southerland
GLBN Co-Chairs
Great Lakes Business Network

Kelli Paige
CEO
Great Lakes Observing System

Dan Robinson
Executive Director
Great Lakes Spirituality Project

Gregory Walz
Chair
Great Lakes Workgroup, Trout Unlimited

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta
Justice and Peace Coordinator
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC

Indra Frank
Director of Environmental Health and Water
Policy
Hoosier Environmental Council

Frances Greenberg
President
Hudson River Audubon Society of
Westchester

Rebecca Esselman
Executive Director
Huron River Watershed Council

Edward L Michael
Chair, Government Affairs
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited

Gary Struck
President
Illinois Division of the Izaak Walton League

Jim Sweeney
Water Quality Committee
Indiana Division Izaak Walton League of
America

Gene Hopkins
President
Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable

Stephen Weiter
President
Iroquois Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Richard Graham
Great Lakes Committee Chair
Izaak Walton League of America

Susan Thomas
Director of Legislation & Policy
Just Transition Northwest Indiana

Richard Redman
President
Lake Champlain Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Kristen Fink
REHS
Lake County General Health District
(LCGHD)

Paul Pacholski
President
Lake Erie Charter Boat Association

Michael Lenetsky
President
Leon Chandler Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Michael Beachy
President
Little Elkhart Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Stuart Buckner
President
Long Island Trout Unlimited

Laurie Seibert
President
Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter of
Trout Unlimited

Cheryl Nenn
Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Brenda Coley
Co-Executive Director
Milwaukee Water Commons

Steve Morse
Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Jill Crafton
MN Division -IWLA National Director
MN Division - Izaak Walton League of
America

Kenneth Ziobro
President
Mohawk Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Caitlin Wall
Water Policy Manager
National Audubon Society

Kira Davis
Great Lakes Senior Program Manager
National Parks Conservation Association

Lawrence Charette
Chairman
New York State Council of Trout Unlimited

Larry Federman
President
Northern Catskills Audubon Society

Joan Collins
Conservation Chair
Northern New York Audubon

Matt Misicka
Executive Director
Ohio Conservation Federation

Melanie Houston
Managing Director of Water Policy
Ohio Environmental Council

Betty Cantley
Advocate
Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition

Scott Saluga
Ohio State Council Chair
Ohio State Council of Trout Unlimited

Maryanne Adams
Conservation Chair
Onondaga Audubon

Kristina Patterson
Executive Director
Partners for Clean Streams, Inc.

Patrick McDonnell
President & CEO
PennFuture

Irene Senn
Coordinate
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes

Harshini Ratnayaka
Advocacy Coordinator
Save the Dunes

John Peach
Executive Director
Save The River Upper St. Lawrence
Riverkeeper

Anne Swaim
Executive Director
Saw Mill River Audubon

Caitlin Ferrante
Conservation Program Manager
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter

Erma Leaphart
Great Lakes Organizer
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

Jill Haberman
Justice and Peace Animator
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

Brien Weiner
President
South Shore Audubon Society

Kelly M. Reed
Senior Vice President, Government
Relations
The Conservation Fund

Jajeane Rose-Burney
Deputy Executive Director
Western New York Land Conservancy

Joe Morgan
President
Western New York Trout Unlimited

Mike Kuhr
Advocacy Chair
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Mark LaBarbera
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation