



Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

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September 25, 2009

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Hon. Daniel K. Inouye, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-131 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Dianne Feinstein, Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-146A The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, and Environment
Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Chairwoman Feinstein, and Ranking Members Cochran and Alexander:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Commission and its eight member states, I am writing to urge you to support full funding of \$475 million in the FY 2010 EPA budget for the multi-agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) proposed by President Obama as you prepare to resolve differences with your colleagues in the House. The House has provided the President's full request of \$475 million in the appropriations bill for the Department of Interior, Environment and Related Agencies and we ask that you accept this funding level.

The Obama Administration has proposed a strong program that is based on sound science and years of research, planning and environmental studies. The Initiative builds on the priorities of the region's governors and the recommendations established in 2005 in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes. This comprehensive strategy defines the problems facing the lakes, outlines solutions and provides clear goals for measuring progress. The Commission's eight member states, together with local governments and nongovernmental stakeholders, have consistently called for increased federal support for implementation of the restoration strategy, to complement and accelerate the substantial efforts of states, local and non-government efforts in the region.

This summer, EPA convened a series of meetings across the Great Lakes basin to review the proposed GLRI and secure feedback on a multi-year action plan to guide its implementation. The meetings demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and support among the states for the Initiative and a clear commitment to lead its implementation. All of the states have identified high-priority, on-the-ground restoration actions that are ready to be implemented immediately.

In brief, the Great Lakes region is well organized and prepared to target the full \$475 million to the most urgent problems facing the Great Lakes. The GLRI will not only help restore this priceless national treasure but will help revitalize the struggling economy in a region hard hit by the recession. We understand the profound role the lakes play in driving our economies and our way of life and, thus, the imperative to restore and protect them for future generations.

Hon. Daniel Inouye, Dianne Feinstein, Thad Cochran and Lamar Alexander
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Please support full funding of \$475 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to strengthen the federal government's partnership with the Great Lakes states in restoring the Great Lakes and advancing our region's economic revitalization. Should you have any questions, please contact our executive director, Tim Eder, at 734-971-9135, teder@glc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Pat Quinn
Chairman