



Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

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Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Commission to urge you to support **H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009**, which the House of Representatives is expected to take up this week. This legislation addresses two of the Commission's top priorities for the Great Lakes: increasing the federal investment in clean water infrastructure and cleaning up contaminated sediments. We urge you to support this important legislation, which will create jobs, stimulate economic development and protect freshwater resources in the eight-state Great Lakes region. The following are two critical areas where H.R. 1262 will support Great Lakes restoration and protection through on-the-ground projects.

- 1. Repairing and Upgrading Failing Wastewater Infrastructure:** H.R. 1262 authorizes \$13.8 billion over five years for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), which provides low-interest loans to communities for wastewater infrastructure. In 2006 more than 23 billion gallons of sewage was dumped into the Great Lakes from failing wastewater systems. This threatens public drinking water supplies, closes beaches, and damages valuable recreational opportunities. The recently approved economic stimulus legislation provides \$4 billion nationally to the CWSRF, which will support nearly \$2 billion in improvements in the Great Lakes states. While important, this is just a fraction of the \$74 billion that U.S. EPA estimates is needed to fully upgrade wastewater infrastructure in the Great Lakes region. Increased funding for the CWSRF, as provided in H.R. 1262, is essential to meet this goal.
- 2. Expediting the Cleanup of Toxic Sediments:** H.R. 1262 authorizes \$750 million over five years for the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which supports cost-shared projects to remediate contaminated sediments in Great Lakes Areas of Concern. Contaminated sediments are the most significant source of pollution in the Areas of Concern. They hinder waterfront development, restrict recreational opportunities, and threaten public health. Since 2002, cleanups funded under the Legacy Act have removed nearly a million cubic yards of toxic sediments from rivers and harbors in the Great Lakes. These cleanups are creating jobs and stimulating economic development in Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Buffalo, Gary, Duluth and other urban areas. Last year's reauthorization of the Legacy Act addressed many important policy needs, but failed to increase the funding authorization as recommended by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. The Commission has identified \$500 million in cleanup projects that could be implemented in the next two years, and the projected cost to totally clean up all toxic sediments is between \$1.5 and \$4.5 billion. The Legacy Act has proven to be highly effective and warrants the increased funding authorization provided by H.R. 1262.

We urge you to support H.R. 1262 as part of a broader agenda for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes, and maximizing the economic and environmental benefits they provide for the 32 million Americans who live in the Great Lakes region. Should you have questions about our recommendations, please contact Tim Eder, executive director (teder@glc.org), or Matt Doss, policy director (mdoss@glc.org) at 734-971-9135. Thank you for your support for the Great Lakes.

Sincerely,

Governor Pat Quinn
Chairman