



Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

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*Ensuring environmental and economic
prosperity for the Great Lakes-St.
Lawrence region through
communications, policy research and
development, and advocacy.*

June 18, 2007

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
40 Dirksen Building
Washington DC. 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

On behalf of the member states of the Great Lakes Commission, I write to thank you for your leadership and support for conservation and protection of our Great Lakes, especially through Farm Bill programs. As the Senate considers reauthorization of the Farm Bill in 2007, I urge you to support the many Farm Bill conservation programs that are essential to state-federal partnership efforts to protect, conserve and restore water resources in the Great Lakes region and in particular, to ask for your assistance in reauthorizing the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

The Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, is the only program authorized specifically for the Great Lakes. The Basin Program is a voluntary pollution prevention initiative that aids Great Lakes restoration efforts by addressing the economic and environmental impacts associated with soil erosion and sedimentation. The Basin Program is a unique federal-state partnership: Great Lakes states assist in program guidance and grant selection and local soil and water conservation districts are frequent recipients of grant funding. To date, 389 projects have been funded over the 16-year life of the project, including 116 projects in Michigan. Our estimates indicate that region-wide, these projects have prevented over one million tons of soil and over 5 million pounds of phosphorus from reaching the Great Lakes or their tributaries.

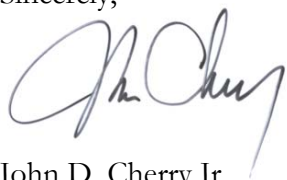
Several other nation-wide Farm Bill programs are vital to Great Lakes protection efforts and are among the most important mechanisms for implementing the recommendations in the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy* – the blueprint endorsed by the Governors, state and federal agencies for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. In particular, those programs that directly protect wetlands and riparian areas along water courses are high priorities for the Great Lakes states. The Commission and the Council of Great Lakes Governors have urged Congress to increase funding for Farm Bill programs that support buffer strips along tributaries to protect water quality from soil erosion. Great Lakes states have pledged to match federal promises in the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy* to restore wetlands. The Wetlands Reserve Program is one

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of the federal governments' most effective and popular programs to assist landowners in protecting remaining wetlands and restoring those that have been lost.

Your assistance and leadership in reauthorizing the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control and the Wetlands Reserve Program, and for ensuring that these and other Farm Bill conservation programs are adequately funded is greatly appreciated. For additional detail on strengthening these programs to support Great Lakes conservation efforts, please contact Commission Executive Director Tim Eder (teder@glc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Cherry Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John D. Cherry Jr.
Chairman