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

September 12, 2016

Dear Members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Commission and its member states and provinces to urge you to take action on key priorities for the Great Lakes before adjourning the 114th Congress. With 90 percent of our nation's supply of fresh surface water, the Great Lakes are a natural treasure a vital economic asset for our eight-state region. The priorities below are vital for advancing our regional strategy to restore the Great Lakes, protect drinking water, create jobs, stimulate economic development and strengthen waterfront communities.

Pass bipartisan legislation authorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative:

Formally authorizing the GLRI will provide a solid legislative platform to ensure our region continues to work together successfully, with effective Congressional oversight, to implement our Great Lakes restoration strategy. The House has unanimously passed H.R. 223 and the Senate EPW Committee has approved S. 1024 authorizing the GLRI, which has also been added to the Senate WRDA bill. The two bills must be reconciled, and we urge the Senate to pass the House bill or amend the version in WRDA to reflect the House bill.

Provide funding for vital Great Lakes programs: We support the following funding levels for programs that are vital to the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes:

- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative** (Interior-EPA): \$300 million [House and Senate recommendation]
- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** (Interior-EPA): \$1.350 billion [Senate recommendation]
- **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund** (Interior-EPA): \$1.070 billion [House recommendation]
- **Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study** (Energy and Water): \$2.6 million [House, Senate and President's budget recommendation]
- **Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barrier** (Energy and Water): \$12 million [House, Senate and President's budget recommendation]
- **Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund** (Energy and Water): \$1.263 billion [House recommendation]
- **Great Lakes Fishery Commission** (State, Foreign Operations): \$24.22 million [House recommendation for the Great Lakes]

Include Great Lakes priorities in the Water Resources Development Act: The House and Senate WRDA bills (H.R. 5303/S. 2848) contain provisions supporting the Great Lakes. We urge that these provisions be included in the final WRDA bill passed by Congress:

- Extend the authorization of the Army Corps' Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration program, which helps restore the Great Lakes [House bill, Sec. 118]
- Ensure the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) is fully used for its authorized purposes [House bill, Sec. 108]
- Authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative [Senate bill, Sec. 7611]
- Address critical water infrastructure needs by modernizing the State Revolving Loan Fund programs and reauthorizing funding to control sewer overflows and safeguard drinking water [Senate bill, Title VII]
- Add language authorizing 10% of *annual* HMTF appropriations for the Great Lakes Navigation System, as opposed to 10% of only *priority* HMFT appropriations as provided in the 2014 WRDA bill.

Pass the Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act (H.R. 4595/S. 2569): This bill authorizes vital research being conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey to effectively manage Great Lakes fishery resources and safeguard the lakes from harmful invasive species such as Asian carp. This work supports state and binational actions to strengthen and conserve Great Lakes fishery resources.

Support House passage of the Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act (S. 1935): This legislation was adopted unanimously by the Senate in July and should be taken up and passed in the House to help communities along the Great Lakes leverage the economic potential of their water resources. The bill will support community efforts to attract water-dependent industries and investments, revitalize neighborhoods, and strengthen recreation and tourism. It creates a voluntary Resilient Waterfront Community designation within the Department of Commerce; establishes a Resilient Waterfront Communities network; and provides technical assistance to communities to support waterfront planning and development. The bill is national in scope but is especially important for the Great Lakes region, where communities are cleaning up degraded and underutilized waterfront areas and developing valuable new commercial and recreational opportunities.

These priorities are supported by resolutions adopted unanimously by the Commission or actions of its Board of Directors in 2016, 2015, 2014 and 2013.

We are making tremendous progress in restoring the Great Lakes and maximizing their value as an environmental and economic resource for our region. The Great Lakes Congressional Delegation has been instrumental to our successes to date, and we urge you to support the priorities listed above to ensure we sustain progress in protecting our region's most valuable natural resource – the Great Lakes. If you have questions or we can be of assistance, please contact the Commission's Executive Director, Tim Eder (734-971-9135, teder@glc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Allan', written in a cursive style.

Jon W. Allan, Chair