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**Contact:** Tim Eder  
**Office:** 734-971-9135 (office)  
734-604-7281 (cell)  
**E-mail:** [teder@glc.org](mailto:teder@glc.org)

## Great Lakes Commission urges Congress to sustain funding for Great Lakes restoration

**Ann Arbor, Mich.** – In a letter this week to the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, Great Lakes Commission Chair James Tierney urged the delegation to sustain appropriations for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the FY 2011 federal budget. “Now, more than ever, we need support from our congressional delegation to help us leverage the Great Lakes to advance our region’s economic and environmental vitality,” Tierney said.

The GLRI is a five-year, \$2.2 billion program to implement a comprehensive restoration plan for the Great Lakes. The Initiative was funded at \$475 million in its first year and the President requested \$300 million for the current fiscal year, FY 2011. As Congress moves to finalize FY 2011 appropriations, the Commission notes that sustaining GLRI funding is essential to enable the region to respond to numerous threats, including Asian carp.

“Nearly 300 restoration projects are underway and hundreds more await funding,” wrote Tierney, emphasizing that “the GLRI is putting people to work and revitalizing an economic engine for shoreline communities.” In the long term, Tierney noted that “sustaining funding for the GLRI is essential to maintaining our collective efforts to stimulate economic growth and invest in the largest freshwater resource in the world.”

The Great Lakes Commission highlighted specific activities that depend on continued funding for the GLRI, including critical actions needed to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes; large-scale cleanup projects in four Great Lakes toxic hotspots; and efforts to prevent sewage discharges, toxic algal blooms and polluted runoff that threaten public water supplies and recreational beaches.

Great Lakes Commission Executive Director Tim Eder said “the restoration work being carried out under the GLRI not only creates jobs now, it contributes to our long-term strategy to use the Great Lakes as a foundation to stimulate economic development and revitalize waterfront communities.” Eder added: “The Great Lakes are an important part of our region’s economic infrastructure.”

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### Great Lakes Commission

James Tierney (NY), Chair; Tim A. Eder, Executive Director  
Eisenhower Corporate Park • 2805 S. Industrial Hwy. Suite 100 • Ann Arbor, Michigan • 48104-6791  
734-971-9135 • Fax: 734-971-9150 • Web: [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org)  
Illinois • Indiana • Michigan • Minnesota • New York • Ohio • Ontario • Pennsylvania • Québec • Wisconsin

The GLRI is implementing a comprehensive restoration plan completed in 2005 and based on priorities established by the governors of the Great Lakes states. A detailed study prepared by the Brookings Institution in 2007 projected that fully implementing this plan would generate \$80-\$100 billion in short and long-term benefits.

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*The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by James Tierney, assistant commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, is an interstate compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors' appointees, state legislators, and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org).*