The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Creating Jobs and Revitalizing Communities

- The Great Lakes provide the backbone for a $5 trillion regional economy. They directly generate more than 1.5 million jobs and $60 billion in wages annually.

- With strong bipartisan support and a proven record of success, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is creating jobs and revitalizing struggling communities across the eight-state Great Lakes region.

- The bipartisan GLRI was formally authorized by Congress in 2016 at $300 million for five years. It is very much a collaboration among multiple federal agencies, the Great Lakes states, local communities and businesses.

- GLRI is the most important line of defense against Asian carp, with six million pounds of Asian carp trapped and removed from the Illinois River – an important pathway to Lake Michigan – helping to protect the $7 billion Great Lakes fishing economy.

- GLRI is helping protect drinking water for 48 million people by working with farmers to prevent polluted runoff that can cause algae blooms. In 2014, a toxic bloom cut off access to clean drinking water for more than 500,000 people. Blooms also threaten Lake Erie’s critical $12.9 billion tourism industry.

- GLRI is accelerating cleanup of Great Lakes toxic hotspots. Work in one of these hotspots in Muskegon, Michigan, is projected to increase property values by nearly $12 million, contribute $600,000 in new tax revenues annually, and attract 65,000 new visitors, generating more than $1 million in new recreational spending. In another city benefiting from a GLRI-led cleanup, an old industrial site is being repurposed as a solar manufacturing plant, bringing jobs back and revitalizing waterfront areas.

- The GLRI is cleaning up a legacy of toxic sediments in waterfront areas. Cleanups are underway at 16 sites in six states, with more sites being investigated. Nearly $100 million is needed in FY 2018 and 2019 to implement these cleanups, which are projected to leverage more than $100 million from non-federal partners.

- Communities across the Great Lakes region are benefiting from economic recovery and re-investment thanks to the GLRI. Full implementation of the initiative is projected to generate $50 billion in long-term economic benefits for the region and a 2-1 return on investment.

Thanks to the GLRI, environmental cleanup in communities across the Great Lakes basin is paving the way for regional economic revitalization.