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May 18, 2018

Honorable John Barrasso
Chair, Environment and Public Works
Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member, Environment and Public
Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) to convey support for provisions in *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018* that support priorities for the Great Lakes and our eight member states. We appreciate your leadership in advancing this legislation, which strengthens a number of important Great Lakes programs and addresses critical challenges to upgrade and maintain water infrastructure in our region.

The GLC strongly supports the following Great Lakes-specific provisions that respond to long-standing priorities for our member states:

- **Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 1990 (Sec. 3604):** This section increases the authorized appropriations for the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Act, a highly successful program through which the federal government, the Great Lakes states, and other stakeholders implement cooperative conservation, restoration and management actions for valuable fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin.
- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (Sec. 3605):** This section increases the authorized appropriations for the GLRI, which enjoys strong, bipartisan support in Congress, among our region's governors, business and industry, conservation organizations, tribes and local communities. This will ensure adequate funding authorization to support continued progress in implementing our regional restoration strategy for the Great Lakes.
- **Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency study (Sec. 3606):** This section authorizes the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency study proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, which will coordinate a strategy and recommend actions to manage and protect the Great Lakes from threats such as lake level fluctuations, erosion, flooding, and nutrient runoff.
- **Completion of Army Corps of Engineers report for the Soo Locks (Sec. 4001):** This section calls for the expeditious completion of key decision documents, including the post-authorization change report for construction of a new Soo Lock. This is a vital priority to ensure the security and resiliency of the Great Lake maritime transportation system, which is critical for our regional and national economies.

The GLC also generally supports the water infrastructure provisions in Title V of the legislation that reauthorize and strengthen existing programs, study new approaches, and promote reforms and best practices to support states and local communities in repairing, maintaining and upgrading wastewater, drinking water and stormwater infrastructure. Nearly \$10 billion is needed annually over the next two decades for water infrastructure in the eight Great Lakes states. These provisions will support state and local efforts, increase federal investments and improve access to critical federal programs. They are consistent with the GLC's 2017 *Joint Action Plan for Clean Water Infrastructure and Services*, which recommends actions to advance a more sustainable water infrastructure system for the Great Lakes region.

The Great Lakes are a natural treasure and a vital economic asset for our eight-state region. They provide drinking water for more than 48 million people, generate more than 1.5 million jobs, and support a \$5 trillion regional economy. Strong collaboration among our states and the federal government, local communities, and industry is solving the most serious problems facing the lakes while revitalizing economies in waterfront communities.

The provisions discussed above advance our collective efforts to address our region's most pressing water-related challenges while maximizing the Great Lakes as an environmental and economic asset. If you have questions, please contact the Commission's Executive Director, Darren Nichols (734-971-9135, dnichols@glc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Linc Stine". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Linc Stine
Chair

cc: Members of the Senate Great Lakes delegation