

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 23, 2023

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Director Young:

We write collectively as members of the Great Lakes Task Force to respectfully ask that the Administration request the authorized level of \$425 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Budget.

The Great Lakes are a true national treasure that we must continue to prioritize and protect each year. These waters—Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior—comprise the largest surface freshwater system in the world, holding nearly 21 percent of the world’s fresh water supply and 90 percent of the United States’ fresh water supply. The Lakes are also a key economic driver for the region that support jobs, commerce, agriculture, transportation, and tourism for millions of people across the country. The bipartisan Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-294) was signed into law in January 2021 to reauthorize the GLRI through FY 2026. The law authorizes \$425 million for GLRI in FY 2024.

The GLRI is protecting these waters, revitalizing our waterfronts, and addressing the urgent challenges threatening the health of our communities and the Great Lakes economy. Year after year, the GLRI has consistently proven to be an economic and environmental success. Since its inception in 2010, more than \$3.3 billion has been used to fund 6,850 projects to combat the greatest threats to the Great Lakes. For example, over 6,000 river miles have been cleared of dams and other barriers reconnecting fish to important habitat. More than 375 million gallons of untreated runoff and more than 2 million pounds of phosphorus, a significant contributor to harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes, have been mitigated and captured through GLRI implemented projects in priority watersheds.

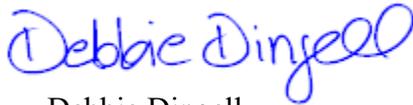
In addition, as we have highlighted before, a 2018 report showed that for every dollar spent through 2016 in cleaning up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), controlling invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat, protecting wetlands, and reducing harmful algae will produce more than \$3 in additional economic activity through 2036.¹ Investing in the GLRI will contribute directly to creating or supporting, on average, more than 5,000 jobs per year. Even with the positive results from over 6,850 projects, however, there is still much work to do.

¹ University of Michigan. 2018. “Socioeconomic Impacts of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.” Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics.

Support for the Great Lakes and GLRI has long seen strong bipartisan support in Congress. Without consistently robust funding, in line with GLRI's current authorized levels, would risk reversing years of progress, dramatically reducing the GLRI's impact, and jeopardizing the environmental and economic health of the region for generations to come.

To that end, we strongly urge you to continue this vital investment in the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes by including the authorized level of \$425 million for the GLRI in the President's FY 2024 Budget. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



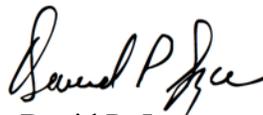
Debbie Dingell
Democratic Co-Chair
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Republican Co-Chair
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Democratic Co-Chair
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce
Republican Co-Chair
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Michael S. Regan, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency