



December 7, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2268 Rayburn HOB  
Washington DC 20515-3809

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2134 Rayburn HOB  
Washington DC 20515-3704

Dear Congressmen Shuster and DeFazio,

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (the Cities Initiative) thanks you for including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (Sec. 5005) in S. 612, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. This bill revises and reauthorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's successful Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for FY2017-2021 at \$300 million per year. The Cities Initiative supports this provision and hopes Congress will enact it as part of WIIN without any unnecessary delay. The Cities Initiative is an organization of 127 U.S. and Canadian mayors representing over 17 million people working together to protect, restore, and sustain one of the largest and most valuable freshwater resources in the world.

GLRI has brought tremendous value to the Great Lakes region since its inception in 2010. The many investments in cleaning up sediments contaminated with toxic chemicals, protecting and restoring habitat and the fish and wildlife that depend on it, preventing the introduction of invasive species and controlling them where they are present, and managing nutrients and other pollutants from nonpoint sources have contributed greatly to the integrity of the resource. The quality of life and economic well-being of the communities that are members of the Cities Initiative depend heavily on the water resource and the improvements resulting from GLRI investments have made a big difference. Over 3000 projects have been funded by GLRI through the years, and in addition to the restoration value of them, the projects have provided jobs and economic value to the region. From earlier studies, such projects are considered to create a 2:1 return on investment.

GLRI is a great investment in our country, our people, and the water resources we are so fortunate to have, and your support of this critically important legislation will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

David A. Ullrich  
Executive Director