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*Ensuring environmental and
economic prosperity for the Great
Lakes-St. Lawrence region through
communications, policy research and
development, and advocacy.*

December 8, 2016

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Inhofe and Shuster, and Ranking Members Boxer and DeFazio:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes Commission and its member states and provinces to convey our support for provisions in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act that address critical priorities for the eight-state Great Lakes region. The Commission has advocated for provisions that advance state and local efforts to restore the Great Lakes, protect valuable fish and wildlife resources, promote commercial navigation, protect drinking water, stimulate economic development and strengthen waterfront communities. We appreciate your including these provisions in the final bill and support their passage.

Authorize and Strengthen the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI): The GLRI is a highly effective, multi-agency initiative that is addressing the most serious problems facing the Great Lakes, such as cleaning up heavily degraded Areas of Concern, controlling Asian carp, preventing polluted runoff that causes harmful algal blooms, and restoring habitat for valuable fish and wildlife resources. The WIIN Act formally authorizes the GLRI and provides a solid legislative platform to ensure continued progress, with effective Congressional oversight, in implementing our Great Lakes restoration strategy.

Sustain the Economic Vitality of the Great Lakes Navigation System (GLNS): The WIIN Act will strengthen the GLNS as a vital economic asset for our region. It makes permanent the allocation of priority funding for the GLNS; establishes a floor for appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund; and requires the Army Corps of Engineers to publish guidance for managing the GLNS as a single, integrated system, as called for by Congress.

Address Critical Water Infrastructure Needs: The legislation includes a variety of provisions that will contribute to the ongoing work of states and local communities to repair, upgrade and monitor water infrastructure to improve drinking water security, protect public health, and reduce discharges of sewage and polluted stormwater into local waterways.

Reauthorize the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act: The legislation reauthorizes and strengthens this program through which the federal government, the Great Lakes states, and other stakeholders implement cooperative conservation, restoration and management actions for fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes Basin.

Reauthorize and Strengthen the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program: The WIIN Act reauthorizes this successful program, which supports high-priority projects that protect the health of the Great Lakes fishery, eliminates the funding cap to ensure its continued use in Great Lakes restoration efforts, and allows for 10% of funds to be used for approved recreational enhancements in projects.

We appreciate your support for these provisions that will sustain our progress in restoring the Great Lakes and maximizing their value as an environmental and economic resource for our region. If you have questions or we can be of assistance, please contact the Commission's Executive Director, Tim Eder (734-971-9135, teder@glc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon W. Allan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "A".

Jon W. Allan, Chair