



June 6, 2025

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lois Frankel  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
State, Foreign Operations, and Related  
Programs  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Mario Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, we write to urge you to support robust funding for Great Lakes restoration in the Fiscal Year 2026 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill. We are grateful for the much needed support the region has received. We share these waters with our Canadian neighbors and our joint efforts are seeing on-the-ground results because of the investments across the region on both sides of the border. However, the Great Lakes still face many urgent threats, that if unaddressed will only get worse and the price we pay will be much higher if Congress fails to strengthen its federal partnership with the region.

First, we ask you to support the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. Canada and the U.S. share this valuable resource that boasts a fishery worth more than \$5.1 billion annually to the region, in addition to providing drinking water to over 40 million people and supporting nearly one-third of U.S. and Canadian economic activity. Working together to protect this fishery is an essential step in ensuring the continued restoration of the waters and the region, in addition to safeguarding a sustainable and thriving economic future. We urge Congress to continue its support for the Commission's critical fisheries and invasive species management efforts, providing no less than \$44.33 million in the new fiscal year.

Second, we ask the Committee to support the efforts of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The State Department is an important contributor to this effort, coordinating our international partnership to protect these waters without which critical restoration targets could not be met. Ongoing efforts are improving the lives of millions of people and the GLRI has undertaken or completed over 8,100 restoration projects throughout the region. These projects are benefiting communities by cleaning up waters that are the drinking source for millions of homes and thousands of industries.

Working together with our neighbors results in greater coordinated investments in Great Lakes restoration, which creates jobs and leads to long-term economic benefits for the region and the country. It is estimated that for every \$1 the GLRI invested to clean up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), control invasive species, restore wildlife habitat, protect wetlands, and reduce harmful algae the investment will produce more than \$3 in additional economic activity regionwide over 20 years. The GLRI is revitalizing our waterfronts and leading a resurgence in

water-based outdoor recreation, increasing tourism across the region. A combined effort that cannot be accomplished without engaging and coordinating fully with the Canadian government, Provinces, communities, and tribes.

Still much work needs to be done. Algal blooms, invasive species, and toxic pollutants threaten the region, endangering wildlife and public health, lowering property values, and hurting the region's economy. Moreover, emerging contaminants and a changing climate continue to exacerbate the challenges we face, many of which disproportionately impact people that have historically borne the brunt of environmental harm. Allowing these problems to get worse will only put our communities at risk and make them more expensive to solve.

As the source of drinking water for over 40 million Americans and Canadians and the heart of our binational economy, the nation cannot afford to stop protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. Progress is being made, and the region stands ready to continue this important federal partnership, ensuring that all benefit from and enjoy these investments in restoration and protection. We urge you to ensure that the fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills fund the efforts of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission at \$44.33 million.

If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact our Coalition's Senior Program Manager, Alexis Lopez-Cepero, at [alopez-cepero@npca.org](mailto:alopez-cepero@npca.org).

Sincerely,

Alliance for the Great Lakes

Between the Waters

Beyond Nuclear

Bridges//Puentes Justice Collective of the Southeast

Bright Neighborhood CDC

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Clean Wisconsin

Climate Reality Project

Clinton River Watershed Council

Conservation Resource Alliance

Council of the Great Lakes Region

East Michigan Environmental Action Council

Elevate

Elliott Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Chicago)

Environmental Law & Policy Center

Erie County (NY) Federation of Sportsman's Clubs

Faith in Place

For Love of Water (FLOW)

Freshwater Future

Friends of Euclid Creek

Friends of the Detroit River

Friends of the Rouge

Friends of the St. Clair River

Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Great Lakes Business Network

Great Lakes Observing System

GreenLatinos

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC

Hoosier Environmental Council

Huron Pines

Huron River Watershed Council

Illinois Division Izaak Walton League

Illinois Environmental Council  
Indiana Sportsmen Roundtable  
Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy  
Michigan Climate Action Network  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
Michigan Microplastics Coalition  
Michigan Trout Unlimited  
Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern  
Community Advisory Committee  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Milwaukee Water Commons  
Minnesota Environmental Partnership  
National Museum of the Great Lakes  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
NYS Council Trout Unlimited  
Ohio Conservation Federation  
Ohio Environmental Council  
Onondaga Audubon  
Partners for Clean Streams  
PennFuture  
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes  
Sanctuary Farms  
Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance  
Save Our Water  
Save the Dunes  
Save The River  
Shedd Aquarium  
Sierra Club  
The Michigan Forest Association  
The Stewardship Network  
The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay  
The Wetlands Initiative

Three Waters Pipeline Resistance Team  
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council  
Trout Unlimited Chapter 589  
Trout Unlimited Great Lakes Workgroup  
Water You Fighting For?  
We the People of Detroit  
Western NY Trout Unlimited Chapter 068  
Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited  
Wisdom Institute  
Zero Waste Detroit