



EXAMPLE LETTER—IDENTICAL, INDIVIDUALLY  
ADDRESSED LETTERS SENT TO EACH MEMBER OF CONGRESS

February 25, 2008

The Honorable Carl Levin  
269 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

JIM DOYLE  
CHAIR  
*Governor of Wisconsin*

ROD BLAGOJEVICH  
*Governor of Illinois*

MITCH DANIELS  
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JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
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TIM PAWLENTY  
*Governor of Minnesota*

ED RENDELL  
*Governor of Pennsylvania*

ELIOT SPITZER  
*Governor of New York*

TED STRICKLAND  
*Governor of Ohio*

DAVID NAFTZGER  
*Executive Director*

Dear Senator Levin:

On behalf of the Governors of the eight Great Lakes States, we want to share with you our joint agenda for restoring the Great Lakes and ask for a significant improvement in federal investment to improve a watershed that is home to more than 30 million Americans. By making these investments to protect and restore the Great Lakes, the region and nation will benefit with a strong return on investment. A recent economic study led by senior Brookings Institution researchers predicted a nearly two-to-one long-term return on investment to the national economy for each dollar spent on Great Lakes restoration. This is in addition to an estimated nearly two-to-one short-term return on investment to the regional economy. The economic case for increasing the federal investment in Great Lakes restoration is compelling.

In December 2005, the Governors joined with representatives of the Bush Administration, Congress, and regional mayors and tribes to unveil a strategy to restore and protect the Great Lakes. This Strategy was developed as a result of a Presidential Executive Order establishing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC), a process that included over 1500 stakeholders from across the spectrum. We are mindful of intense federal budgetary constraints and the need to address environmental concerns from coast to coast. However, we believe that further delays in true federal engagement will further imperil the lakes and exponentially raise long-term restoration costs.

Our list of near-term action priorities remains essentially unchanged from previous years. Our long-term goal remains to secure large-scale, long-term funding to implement the Strategy's recommendations and to enact management reforms to ensure that resources are efficiently used to address our highest-priority needs.

We continue to recognize that specific actions can and must be taken now to advance the GLRC Strategy. Therefore, we ask you to support the attached series of near-term actions to protect and restore the Great Lakes in FFY 2009, which include:

- Achieve broad, national protection against the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species from all pathways through Congressional passage of a *National Aquatic Invasive Species Act* (S. 725).

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Separately, we applaud the recent Congressional authorization to upgrade, complete construction, operate and maintain a permanent, two-dispersal barrier system in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal at full federal cost in order to prevent the Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes. We also applaud the recent Congressional appropriation of approximately \$9.1 million for FFY 2008 toward this end. We urge Congress to appropriate the remaining funds necessary to complete this effort in FFY 2009.

- For FFY 2008, \$34.5 million was appropriated in support of the Great Lakes Legacy Act. However, the original authorization under the Legacy Act has now expired. As outlined in the GLRC Strategy, Congress should revise and reauthorize the Great Lakes Legacy Act and appropriate \$150 million annually beginning in FFY 2009 in support of the Act.
- Appropriate \$28.5 million to begin restoration work immediately of 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin. The States remain committed to working with other non-federal partners to provide an additional \$28.5 million cost-share toward this end.

We continue to want to ensure that existing and proven core programs, such as the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund; the Coastal Zone Management Program; and, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Sea Lamprey control program are fully funded. Continuing programs like these is critical to maintaining the gains made through past investments.

We are deeply disappointed by the continuation of such cuts as reflected in the appropriation of only \$689.1 million in the FFY 2008 budget passed by Congress late last year in support of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund—a \$394.7 million cut on the previous year's appropriation, and a \$660.9 million cut over the historical full-funding amount of \$1.35 billion. These cuts will result in an approximate loss of over \$140 million to the Great Lakes States. We therefore urge you to both restore the FY 2008 cut of \$394.7 million and, in addition, appropriate for FFY 2009 the historical full-funding of \$1.35 billion in support of this program.

In the coming weeks you will be hearing and seeing much more from our States' constituents who believe the time for planning has passed, and that critical remedial and preventive actions are overdue. In partnership with your States, we hope you will consider the attached list of near-term action priorities we have assembled, and urge you to consult with our offices to address outstanding issues or concerns.

Sincerely,



Jim Doyle  
Chair, Council of Great Lakes Governors  
Governor of Wisconsin

Attachment

**COUNCIL OF GREAT LAKES GOVERNORS  
GREAT LAKES RESTORATION AND PROTECTION  
NEAR TERM ACTION ITEMS  
FFY 2009**

**Aquatic Invasive Species**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) continue to pose one of the most serious threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem. An average of one new species is discovered in the Great Lakes ecosystem every eight months, and once present, eradication is often impossible. Prevention is vital to stemming ecosystem impacts from new invasive species. And, because AIS easily transfer from watershed to watershed, it is absolutely critical that comprehensive national action be taken to combat the spread of AIS.

Therefore, the federal government must move swiftly under its existing authorities to require improvement for ballast water management including practices for those ships declaring no ballast on board to forestall the introduction of new invasive species to the Great Lakes.

We continue to ask that injurious carp species be listed under the Lacey Act to limit the spread of the carp to the Great Lakes and other watersheds.

In addition, Congress should pass and the President should sign S.725, the *National Aquatic Invasive Species Act* (NAISA). Enactment of such a NAISA is one of the key legislative objectives of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's (GLRC) Strategy. Passage of comprehensive federal legislation such as NAISA would address many of the key recommendations developed by the participants in the GLRC and is critical to our overall restoration goals.

To combat AIS, funds should be authorized and appropriated via the passage of the NAISA or other legislation as follows:

- We applaud Congressional authorization to upgrade, complete construction, operate and maintain a permanent, two-dispersal barrier system in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal at full federal cost in order to prevent the Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes. We also applaud the recent Congressional appropriation of approximately \$9.1 million in FFY 2008 toward this end. We urge Congress to appropriate the remaining funds necessary to complete this effort in FFY 2009.
- \$8 million for Great Lakes State-specific management plans. It is vital that these funds be distributed to the States and Tribes to implement existing plans approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- \$11.25 million to prevent introduction of AIS by vessels (includes \$6 million in support of the U.S. Coast Guard's Section 1101 program, \$2.5 million for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Section 1101 program, and \$2.75 million to Task Force Section 1101).
- \$1 million for model regional, State and local rapid response contingency strategies.

## **Coastal Health**

Elimination of sewage overflows to the Great Lakes and their tributaries is a region-wide need and the most direct means of improving coastal health. Beach closures are one of the most obvious markers of degraded coastal conditions.

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) are the greatest impediment to improving coastal health. The federal government, in cooperation with the States, should ensure that all CSO/SSO communities have completed a long-term control plan (LTCP) within the next four years and are making adequate progress in implementing these plans.

The cost of correcting CSOs and SSOs is burdensome to local communities and to ratepayers. The Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) has served as a critical tool for updating the sewerage systems in the Great Lakes. Unfortunately, recent and ongoing major cuts to this program have resulted in a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars for the Great Lakes States. We are deeply disappointed by the continuation of such cuts as reflected in the appropriation of only \$689.1 million in the FFY 2008 budget passed by Congress late last year—a \$394.7 million cut on the previous year's appropriation, and a \$660.9 million cut over the historical full-funding amount of \$1.35 billion. These cuts will result in an approximate loss of over \$140 million to the Great Lakes States. We therefore urge you to both restore the FY 2008 cut of \$394.7 million and, in addition, appropriate for FFY 2009 the historical full-funding of \$1.35 billion in support of this program.

In addition, we again ask that an additional \$2 million be provided under the Beach Act to enable Great Lakes States and Tribes to standardize, trial, and implement a risk-based approach to beach/coastal assessment. Beyond that, we seek to maintain current funding levels: \$1.75 million for the Great Lakes States and \$50,000 for eligible Tribes.

## **Areas of Concern**

Passage of the Great Lakes Legacy Act provided for the first time a dedicated source of funding for remediation of contaminated sediments in the Areas of Concern (AOC). For FFY 2008, \$34.5 million was appropriated in support of the Great Lakes Legacy Act. However, the original authorization under the Legacy Act has now expired. The Legacy Act has expired and needs to be reauthorized and amended as soon as possible. As outlined in the GLRC Strategy, Congress should revise and reauthorize the Great Lakes Legacy Act and appropriate \$150 million for FFY 2009 in support of the Act.

Restoration of the AOCs is necessarily driven at the local level, through plans developed by States, Tribes, local officials, and concerned citizens. Unless this capacity is nurtured at the local level, progress on AOC restoration will be limited. While States and non-governmental organizations have continued to support Remedial Action Plan (RAP) groups, federal support has dwindled with negative effect. Accordingly, we again request that \$10 million be appropriated to support State and local AOC/RAP programs in the Great Lakes States, an increase of \$8 million over the current appropriation. We also request that USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) receive \$1.7 million for program administration—an increase of \$1.2 million over the current

appropriation.

### **Toxic Pollutants**

Progress in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes will only be achieved and maintained to the extent that toxic pollutants are controlled. Certain persistent toxic substances have been significantly reduced in the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem over the past 30 years but they continue to be present at levels that pose threats to human and wildlife health. These substances also warrant fish consumption advisories in all five lakes. More recently, researchers have documented the presence of additional chemicals of emerging concern that may also pose threats to the Great Lakes.

The federal government should restate its commitment to implement the Great Lakes Bi-national Toxics Strategy and should evaluate its implementation schedule for opportunities to accelerate its efforts.

We ask that the FFY 2009 budget include an additional \$2 million to be distributed to the States to expand the toxics reduction program in the Great Lakes Initiative.

The Administration and Congress are asked to provide \$1 million in FFY 2009 in ongoing funds to continue Tribal fish tissue contaminant analysis programs and related community education programs. Congress is again asked to appropriate an additional \$100,000 in the FFY 2009 budget to facilitate Tribal participation in a mercury stewardship program.

Emerging chemicals of concern are little understood but pose a potentially serious threat to aquatic life and wildlife in the Basin. We ask that Congress provide \$100,000 for monitoring these new chemical contaminants.

### **Habitat and Species**

Protecting and restoring wetlands and Great Lakes tributaries can significantly advance the preservation of species diversity in the Great Lakes Basin. These activities are also key to the full implementation of international agreements on management of migratory birds and Great Lake fish.

In 2006, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act was reauthorized. Fully funding this program would help address one of our greatest challenges--protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitat. If fully funded, GLRC members will have increased capacity to implement specific recommendations of the GLRC Strategy. While specific project objectives may vary among jurisdictions, the composite results will help attain the regionally important Strategy goals. We ask that the fully authorized \$16 million be appropriated for FFY 2009.

We also continue to ask that \$28.5 million be provided to restore 200,000 acres of wetlands, toward the GLRC Strategy's goal of eventual restoration of 550,000 acres. States, local governments and NGOs would raise an additional \$28.5 million in non-federal matching funds.

To maximize the use of existing funding for wetlands protection and restoration, the GLRC strategy proposes that the Federal Interagency Task Force review all federal agencies' wetland management programs and develop a consolidated approach. We continue to call for this needed action.

Great Lakes tributaries are key spawning and nursery areas for Great Lakes fish. Species recovery plans are dependent on protecting existing high quality tributaries and restoring other tributaries with the potential to support targeted species. These activities are site-specific, based on watershed hydrologic and physical habitat needs. The GLRC Strategy set a near-term protection and restoration goal of ten tributary streams. We ask that Congress pass a Great Lakes River Restoration Act and direct \$40 million in the FFY 2009 budget for Fish and Wildlife Service programs to be directed to key tributary stream restorations.

### **Nonpoint source pollution**

Nonpoint source pollution impacts vary greatly in frequency and severity across the Great Lakes. Impacts have been particularly severe in coastal wetlands and tributaries that once buffered the Lakes from environmental damage.

Although there are existing programs to deal with sedimentation and nutrient enrichment, the current needs outstrip existing program capacity. We ask that the FFY 2009 budget include an additional \$66 million to increase enrollment in buffer strip programs.

Urban streams are particularly vulnerable to nonpoint source pollution. We request \$18 million in FFY 2009 for hydrologic improvement projects in urbanized areas where runoff from development directly affects natural waterways and their confluence with the Great Lakes or connecting waters.

### **Indicators and Information**

Accountability demands that the Great Lakes restoration effort be able to determine baseline conditions and assess the results of restoration projects and investments. In addition, the capacity to assess trends is needed to observe long term change and detect the emergence of new issues (e.g. new exotic species).

The SOLEC process to develop indicators should be completed for a full suite of 80 indicators, with particular attention to the use of indicators that will measure the success of the measures recommended in the GLRC Strategy. We ask that \$800,000 be provided in FFY 2009 toward this end. We continue to believe that a "top ten" list of indicators should be developed and reported to the public on an annual basis.

The Great Lakes Federal Interagency Task Force should review monitoring programs among its member agencies to ensure effective and efficient gathering and reporting of data. The Task Force should coordinate with the States and Tribes to optimize the effectiveness of monitoring investments throughout the region.

## **Sustainability**

The philosophy of sustainability overlays all the recommendations developed through the GLRC process. The positive result of investment in restoration projects can only be maintained over time if sustainable practices become more widespread. Many of the recommendations in the GLRC's Strategy reflect a sustainable approach.

In the near term, we suggest that federal agencies review prioritization formulas for brownfield grant and loan programs, and for State Revolving Fund loan programs, to determine whether projects that reflect sustainable practices or advance sustainable principles can be awarded a higher priority for funding or a more favorable interest rate.