



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

April 16, 2010

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

As you work on the 2011 Budget Resolution, we urge you to include \$475 million in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative within the funds provided for natural resources and the environment.

The Great Lakes are an important national treasure. The Great Lakes hold 90 percent of the U.S. surface fresh water and are the largest system of fresh surface water on earth. Over 40 million people currently rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water, and the global water demand is expected to double every 21 years.

Unfortunately, the health of the Great Lakes is threatened by aquatic invasive species, contaminated sediment, nonpoint source pollution, and habitat loss. According to some scientific views, the Great Lakes are at a tipping point. Failure to protect and restore the lakes now will result in more serious consequences.

Knowing the importance of the Great Lakes, over 1,500 federal, state, local, tribal and other stakeholders from the region spent over a year drafting the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy Report in 2005. The Strategy Report is the blueprint for how additional federal resources may be spent to address the many threats facing the Great Lakes.

In 2008, President Obama committed to a \$5 billion Great Lakes restoration program over 10 years. Including \$475 million in the Budget for the EPA will help keep that commitment.

Sincerely,

George V. Voinovich
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator



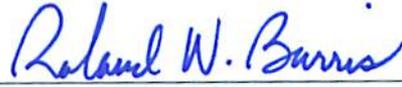
Charles Schumer
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Russell Feingold
United States Senator



Roland Burris
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator