

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies considers FY2020 appropriations requests, we are requesting full funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$300 million. For the second year in a row the President's FY2020 budget request cuts funding for the GLRI by 90 percent, after proposing to eliminate funding for the program in the FY2018 budget. While we are pleased that the President recently said he would support full funding for GLRI, Congress has yet to receive an addendum to the President's FY2020 budget request. We remain concerned that the cuts formally proposed in the budget will reverse the progress that has been made to protect and improve the Great Lakes, the world's largest freshwater body, which supplies drinking water to millions of people and contributes billions of dollars to the economy each year.

In December 2016, Congress reauthorized GLRI as part of the Waster Infrastructure Improvements for the Nations Act (P.L. 114-322) for five years at \$300 million. With your help, Congress has consistently fully funded GLRI since its inception in 2010. Most recently, that occurred through H. J. Res. 31, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-6).

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is the largest investment in the Great Lakes' health, ecosystem, and water quality. Since its inception in 2010, \$2.4 billion has been used to fund over 4,700 projects to combat the greatest threats to the Great Lakes, including invasive species, harmful algal blooms and loss of fish and wildlife habitats. The program has leveraged up to 35% of federal funding with nonfederal dollars from a wide range of partners, including nonprofit organizations, states, communities, educational institutions, and private companies. In targeting Areas of Concern, the program has successfully addressed problems that directly impact public health and safety including beach closings, restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, dredging restrictions, and problems with drinking water taste, odor and consumption. The Great Lakes provide drinking water for 40 million people, contributes billions in tourism each year, and support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the region.

We appreciate your past support of the GLRI and look forward to working with you to ensure that the program remains fully funded. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman
United States Senator



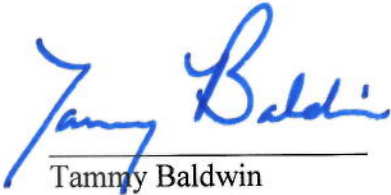
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