



*THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST HOUSE COALITION*

## **GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE**

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chair  
The House Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
1610 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
The House Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
209 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano  
Chairwoman  
The House Subcommittee on Water Resources  
and Environment  
1610 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
The House Subcommittee on Water  
Resources and Environment  
209 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeFazio, Chairwoman Napolitano, Ranking Member Graves, and Ranking Member Westerman:

We write as the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee seeks a final agreement on this year's Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Moving toward conference, we believe the House is in a strong negotiating position. Both WRDA and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) were approved with overwhelming bipartisan support on the House floor. As you craft final legislation on a WRDA package, we ask the House to advocate for provisions intended to support the Great Lakes. We respectfully request that the final package include the 80 percent federal cost share and full authorization for the Brandon Road project, a full 5-year reauthorization and funding increase for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative as proposed by the GLRI Act (H.R. 4031), and the Great Lakes Resiliency Study contained in Section 207 of the House-passed WRDA bill.

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative:** Because of your support and leadership, earlier this year the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 4031 with over two-thirds support. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has also considered the issue, as part of S. 3591, the America's Water Infrastructure Act, which it reported out in May. However, that legislation only included a 1-year reauthorization and funding increase. The successes and partnerships responsible for restoring and protecting our waters rely on the GLRI's multi-year authorization to provide funding certainty for years to come. Therefore, we ask that you advocate for the inclusion of the House-passed GLRI Act, H.R. 4031, because long-term projects critical to the remediation of toxic hotspots and the restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem depend on sustained, reliable funding.

**Brandon Road:** We also request that the House insist that the Brandon Road Lock and Dam construction be authorized at an 80 percent federal cost share. This project, as proposed in

Section 402 of the House WRDA bill, is of national significance and impacts the health and ecosystem of the entire Great Lakes basin. Asian carp pose a grave risk to the Great Lakes, from our world class \$7 billion fishing industry, \$16 billion recreational boating industry, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that these and other industries support. The project has now been favorably reported in the 2019 Chief's Report. With its favorable economic and environmental benefits, the project justifies a special cost share adjustment as proposed by the House.

**Coastal Resiliency:** We also support expansion of the Coastal Resiliency Study. Section 207 of the House-passed WRDA bill contains critical provisions which would clarify the scope of the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study. Resilience has become a growing concern due to the continued deterioration of conditions in the Great Lakes region. Rising temperatures, longer growing seasons, increased precipitation, and more extreme weather events are all contributing factors to the declining conditions throughout the Great Lakes region. Investing in the resilience of the Great Lakes is a worthwhile effort, as the National Institute of Building Science found that every \$1 spent on resilience can save \$6 on disaster and mitigation costs.

The Great Lakes define our region's way of life, provide drinking water for 40 million Americans, and are at the heart of a binational economy that is the 3rd largest in the world. These Great Lakes priorities will help improve lives across Great Lakes communities. Tremendous progress is leading to a resurgence in water-based outdoor recreation as well as increased tourism, housing options, and home values. Additionally, progress is leading to an increasing number of young people staying in or relocating to Great Lakes communities.

Once again, we urge the House to insist on inclusion of an 80% federal cost share for construction of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, to include the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study language as approved by the House, and to ensure that the House-passed GLRI Act be included in any final WRDA package. These priorities represent bipartisan and bicameral priorities supported by our multi-state and bipartisan Great Lakes delegation.

Sincerely,



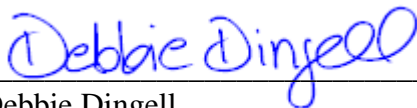
---

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress  
Great Lakes Task Force  
Democratic Co-Chair



---

David P. Joyce  
Member of Congress  
Great Lakes Task Force  
Republican Co-Chair



---

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress  
Great Lakes Task Force  
Democratic Co-Chair



---

Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress  
Great Lakes Task Force  
Republican Co-Chair

Tim Ryan  
/s  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
/s  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
/s  
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley  
/s  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
/s  
Member of Congress

Haley M Stevens  
/s  
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber  
/s  
Member of Congress

Fred Upton  
/s  
Member of Congress

Peter Visclosky  
/s  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
/s  
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers  
/s  
Member of Congress

Mike Gallagher  
/s  
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman  
/s  
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez  
/s  
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik  
/s  
Member of Congress

Chris Jacobs  
/s  
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge  
/s  
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin  
/s  
Member of Congress

Glenn Grothman  
/s  
Member of Congress

John Moolenaar  
/s  
Member of Congress

Bryan Steil  
/s  
Member of Congress

Robert Latta  
/s  
Member of Congress

Dan Kildee  
/s  
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski  
/s  
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly  
/s  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
/s  
Member of Congress

Anthony Brindisi  
/s  
Member of Congress

John Katko  
/s  
Member of Congress

Ron Kind  
/s  
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly  
/s  
Member of Congress