



March 18, 2005

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, S-128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Chairman  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, H-218  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, S-125A  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David R. Obey  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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CO-CHAIR  
*Governor of Wisconsin*

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*Governor of Pennsylvania*

DAVID NAFTZGER  
*Executive Director*

In the President's May 18, 2004 Executive Order, he called the Great Lakes a "national treasure" and directed the federal government to work with the region's leaders to make progress on the significant challenges that remain from past and current environmental impacts to the Great Lakes. To protect and restore this national treasure, the Great Lakes Governors identified nine priorities for their restoration and protection. These priorities serve as the basis for our ongoing collaboration with the Administration, Members of Congress, Great Lakes Mayors, Tribes and members of the stakeholder community as we collectively develop a long-term strategy for Great Lakes restoration and protection.

There are immediate threats to the Great Lakes that need to be addressed even as we develop the long-term strategy. Therefore, we urge the following appropriations in FY06 to advance the region's priorities for Great Lakes restoration and protection. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and requests are likely to mature as the collaboration evolves.

**Promote programs to protect human health against adverse effects of pollution in the Great Lakes ecosystem.**

As the U.S. EPA noted in its August 26, 2004 report, combined sewer overflows continue to be a major source of pollution, concentrated mostly in the older cities of the Great Lakes region and the northeastern U.S. As a result, more than 850 billion gallons of untreated wastewater and storm water are released each year.

The Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund has served as a critical tool for updating the sewerage systems in the Great Lakes. Unfortunately, cuts to this program in FY05 resulted in a loss of approximately \$91.1 million for the Great Lakes States. The President's FY06 Budget proposes an additional 34 percent cut in funding. It is essential that funding of \$1.35 billion be appropriated in support of this program.

**Stop the introduction and spread of non-native aquatic invasive species.**

We are very pleased that, working with members of the Great Lakes Congressional delegation and with the support of the Administration, the necessary funding has been secured to construct an "Asian Carp barrier system" on the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal. However, further funding is necessary to ensure that the Great Lakes are adequately protected. Toward that end, we

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request that \$5.5 million be appropriated to effectively upgrade the existing demonstration barrier and integrate it into a dual barrier system, and \$1 million be appropriated annually to operate and maintain the integrated barrier system at full federal cost.

Sea Lamprey barriers are also essential to protecting and restoring Great Lakes fisheries. To continue the engineering and construction efforts by the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, we ask that specific language for the barrier program be included in the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill and that \$1.5 million be appropriated for FY06.

**Continue to reduce the introduction of persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBT) into the Great Lakes ecosystem.**

Contaminated sediments remain a persistent source of bioaccumulative toxics in the Great Lakes ecosystem. Immediate action must be taken to protect the health and welfare of our citizens from these toxics. The Great Lakes Legacy Act has authorized funds that would begin to immediately address this substantial and ongoing problem.

We support the President's request for the Great Lakes Legacy Act to be funded at \$50 million.

**Additional Appropriations**

We also ask that the following appropriations be made for FY06 to ensure that all of the region's priorities for Great Lakes restoration and protection are met.

**Control pollution from diffuse sources into water, land and air.**

The Clean Water Act Section 319 program provides our States with the resources necessary to address nonpoint source pollution. This program is important for assisting both rural communities to address these problems and cities to reduce loading from urban runoff. Additionally, many States use these funds to implement water quality clean-up plans (called Total Maximum Daily Loads or TMDLs). We request that funds for this program be immediately restored to previous years' levels of approximately \$60 million for the Great Lakes States.

**Restore to environmental health the Areas of Concern (AOC) identified by the International Joint Commission as needing remediation.**

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement directs Canada and the United States, working with State and Provincial governments, to develop plans to restore and protect ecosystem health so that the water is drinkable, beaches are swimmable and fish are safe to eat, among other beneficial uses. The two nations also agreed that the worst areas, designated as "Areas of Concern," would be given priority attention.

We therefore ask Congress to support the President's request to appropriate \$5.7 million to distribute to the Great Lakes States for Remedial Action Plans and Lakewide Management Plans, and \$15.9 million for other Great Lakes and AOC related remediation activities.

**Enhance fish and wildlife by restoring and protecting habitats and coastal wetlands.**

The Coastal Zone Management Program serves as an important resource for conserving and restoring coastal resources.

We therefore ask that funds be provided nationally in the amount of \$90 million, with \$15 million to support Great Lakes Coastal Zone Management Programs.

**Adopt sustainable use practices that can protect environmental resources and that may enhance the commercial and recreational value of our Great Lakes.**

In spite of extensive efforts in all the Great Lakes States and municipalities to improve sewage treatment and reduce other risks to recreational waters, beach closings remain a vexing problem. Monitoring and early detection is essential to ensure that our citizens' health is adequately protected. The Beach Act has provided critical funds to allow the Great Lakes States to improve beach-monitoring and posting programs.

We welcome and appreciate that \$10 million was appropriated in support of the Beach Act. We ask that this important program be fully funded. In addition, we continue to urge you to allow State grant administration costs to be allowable in determining match requirements.

**Ensure the sustainable use of our water resources while confirming that the States retain authority over water use and diversions of Great Lakes waters.**

To successfully manage water supplies in the Great Lakes, the collection and application of scientific information regarding water availability is crucial. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is currently implementing a pilot program in the Great Lakes to assess the availability of water. Partial funding has been appropriated for the first year of this five year program. Accordingly, we would ask that funding in the amount of \$2.6 million be appropriated annually for the USGS National Assessment of Water Availability and Use—Great Lakes Pilot Project, to collect and apply surface and ground water information for collaborative, regional decision making. In addition, we would ask that funding in the amount of \$2 million annually be appropriated for the USGS to produce three-dimensional geologic models of glacial materials needed for the National Assessment of Water Availability and Use—Great Lakes Pilot Project.

We welcome the opportunity to join you in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes by taking these substantive steps this year. We believe progress toward our shared goals for the Great Lakes is essential to the public health and economic vitality of our nation. We continue to engage the public in our dialogue and look forward to building on the partnership with the Administration and among our region's Governors, Mayors, Tribes, Members of Congress and members of the stakeholder community.



Rod Blagojevich  
Governor of Illinois



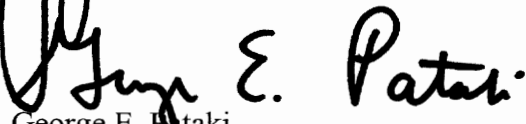
Mitch Daniels  
Governor of Indiana



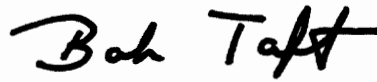
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