Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 19, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We are writing to respectfully request that you include funding in your Fiscal Year 2005 budget request for Great Lakes restoration.

As you know, the Great Lakes are the largest body of surface freshwater on the planet, and the source of drinking water for more than 28 million Americans. While the Great Lakes have improved in the more than 30 years since the passage of the Clean Water Act, the Lakes continue to suffer from a host of problems. For example, 20 percent of Great Lakes shoreline contains polluted sediment, every Great Lakes state has issued fish consumption advisories, and each year the number of beach closures increases. In 2002, there were 919 beach closings on Lake Michigan alone.

During this past year, there have been two congressional oversight hearings on the management of the Great Lakes, and the General Accounting Office released a report in April that concluded that there was no coordination of existing Great Lakes programs and that a Great Lakes ecosystem restoration plan is needed. Great Lakes restoration is supported throughout the region from a broad range of groups such as Lake Michigan Federation, Ducks Unlimited, American Fisheries Society, and National Marine Manufacturers Association. Further, both the Council of Great Lakes Governors and The Great Lakes Cities Initiative, a consortium of mayors from the region, support Great Lakes restoration. Given the unprecedented level of support for this national treasure, we respectfully request that you include funding in your Fiscal Year 2005 budget request to Congress.

The Great Lakes are an incredible treasure and in need of your support. We hope you will join us by including restoration funds in your budget.

Sincerely,

Mike DeWine Carl Levin

Rahm Emanuel Pete Hoekstra

George V. Voinovich

Dennis Statenow

Dave Kine

Vernon J. Ehlers

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Chris Chel

Sherrod Brown

Bart Stupak

Jerry Kleczka

Mark R. Kennedy