

- SAMPLE LETTER -
IDENTICALLY, INDIVIDUALLY ADDRESSED LETTERS SENT TO EACH
DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Senator Patty Birkholz

Chair, Great Lakes Legislative Caucus
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Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Representative Karen May

255-S Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Senator George Maziarz

Room 811, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Ann Rest

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 205
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

January 31, 2008

The Honorable John McCain
P.O. Box 16118
Arlington, VA 22215

Dear Senator McCain:

As members of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus – a group of state legislators from the Great Lakes states working to protect the Great Lakes – we are writing to ask you to join our efforts on behalf of the Great Lakes. We encourage you to support two crucial initiatives - the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (Compact) and funding to implement the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes are essential to the economic and cultural identity of our region. The lakes themselves are a source of jobs, food, and recreation for more than 30 million Americans and provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife.

Unfortunately the Great Lakes suffer from serious threats such as sewage overflows, invasive species, water loss, and contaminated sediments. These have led to illness, record beach closings, habitat loss, and billions of dollars in lost economic opportunity and environmental damage. The Great Lakes also lay vulnerable to the threat of outside interests eager to divert Great Lakes water and deplete this national treasure.

Thankfully we have manageable solutions to these problems. The Great Lakes Compact would ban diversions and establish rules for Great Lakes water use that everyone must follow. State legislatures across the region are in the process of approving the Great Lakes Compact, which will then require Congressional approval, and **we urge you as a Presidential candidate to support this effort as well.**

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy outlines an action plan of manageable solutions to protect and restore the Great Lakes from threats like sewage overflows and invasive species. State legislators have been active in working to implement priority recommendations of the Strategy. For example the State of Michigan has passed its own law to combat the threat of invasive species from ocean going ships. But we need Congress and the next President to make Great Lakes restoration a priority as well. If you haven't already, **we urge you to sign the Great Lakes restoration pledge being circulated by Congressmen Kirk, Ehlers, Emanuel, and Lipinski.**

At a moment when concerns about the economy are at the top of voters' minds across the country, please recognize that protecting and restoring the Great Lakes is about more than protecting the environment. It is also about stimulating our economy and safeguarding a way of life. As was noted by a recent Brookings Institution report, fully funding the Strategy will produce a direct economic benefit of at least \$50 billion and thousands of new jobs.

A recent report endorsed by over 200 scientists throughout the U.S. and Canada concluded that the Great Lakes are nearing a tipping point of irreversible changes. Clearly we are at a crossroads. We hope you will join us in ensuring a brighter future for the millions of Americans living in the Great Lakes region by supporting the Great Lakes Compact and funding for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. If we can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,

Senator Patty Birkholz (R-MI)

Representative Karen May (D-IL)

Senator George Maziarz (R-NY)

Senator Ann Rest (D-MN)