



*THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST COALITION*

## **GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE**

July 27, 2007

The Honorable Stephen Johnson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

Three years ago, President Bush issued Executive Order 13340 to establish the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration of National Significance. Both efforts were designed to provide more systematic collaboration and better integration of effort in the environmental restoration and management of the Great Lakes. We have been impressed with the commitment by our region's leaders to the collaboration process, but we are very disappointed that since the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy Report was released, agency efforts and enthusiasm for implementing the Executive Order have waned. Although the Federal agencies regularly meet, restoration progress has been feeble. We also are concerned that coordination between the Federal agencies with state, tribal, local and other partners remains inconsistent at best and non-existent at worst. In fact, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration has not brought all of its stakeholders together since the Strategy was released in December of 2005.

In order to promote Great Lakes restoration and effective policy, we would appreciate a response to the following questions.

1. What is the status of the Federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force's 48 near-term actions, and what standards is the Task Force using to judge progress in achieving these actions? Does the Task Force plan to update its list of action items? Please provide a summary for each action and an explanation of how those near-term actions that have not been completed yet will be achieved.
2. The EPA has stated in the past that the Collaboration is a good forum to identify opportunities to improve coordination within the Federal government and with its partners. In EPA's opinion, has the Federal Interagency Task Force or the executive committee identified major issues in need of coordination? If so, what are they? If no coordination issues have been identified, please explain whether there are limitations preventing the identification of coordination issues.

3. How has the Task Force facilitated coordination of Great Lakes restoration and protection activities among Great Lakes Regional Collaboration participants? Please be specific.
4. Have interim goals that can be measured and reported been established for the GLRC? If so, what are they? If they have not been, please explain why. Does the Task Force intend to develop interim goals? If so, how and by when? If not, why?
5. Is the GLRC Executive Committee identifying opportunities to improve coordination? If so, what are they? If not, why? Is the GLRC Executive Committee acting on those opportunities? If so, please explain how.
6. How often does the Great Lakes Federal Interagency Task Force meet? Are the Task Force meetings open to the public? If not, why? How often does the Regional Working Group meet? Are those meetings open to the public? If not, why?

We look forward to receiving your reply in the near future.

Sincerely,



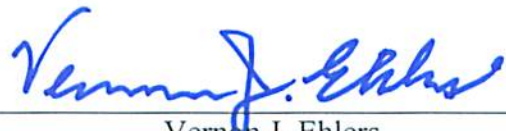
George Voinovich  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



John Dingell  
Member of Congress



Vernon J. Ehlers  
Member of Congress



Mark Kirk  
Member of Congress



Louise Slaughter  
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