



February 17, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters[®]-Great Lakes Coalition, I ask you to vote against H.R. 1 because it would slow efforts to restore the Great Lakes by cutting support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative by \$75 million from the President's fiscal year 2011 request of \$300 million.

Great Lakes restoration efforts are improving the lives of millions of Americans in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These efforts are cleaning up drinking water flowing to millions of homes and thousands of industries and improving infrastructure important for future economic growth. Efforts are also helping prevent polluted run-off and clean up pollution to keep beaches open, clean up toxic hot spots and install new sewage treatment facilities, and employ specialists restoring wetlands.

Restoring the Lakes also produces \$2 for every \$1 we invest. Restoration projects create good-paying jobs now, from hydrologists to engineers, landscape architects to truck drivers and more, while laying the foundation for long-term prosperity. Restoration projects, in short, deliver results. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is benefitting people, communities and businesses. By cleaning up drinking water, putting people to work and improving the quality of life for millions of people, Great lakes restoration may be the best return on the federal dollar in the budget.

However, there is still much work that needs to be done. Aging sewers dump billions of gallons of sewage into the Lakes, closing beaches and threatening our health. Invasive species such as zebra mussel and sea lamprey are harming the food web and commercial and sport fisheries—while new threats like the Asian carp continue to appear. Toxic pollutants remain in the mud along Great Lakes rivers and harbors of major cities throughout the region, posing risks to human health and wildlife and pushing down property values. There is a backlog of projects that are ready-to-go. We must continue efforts to modernize sewage treatment, clean up polluted harbors, restore wetlands and prevent unwanted, new species from entering the Lakes. Each of these steps is essential if we are to restore the Lakes, revive the economy, and restore the vital center of our country.

Cutting funding means slowing our restoration efforts down letting problems get worse and more expensive to solve. Cutting back on our commitment will cost the region the opportunity to create hundreds of thousands of jobs; will worsen existing threats while not preparing for new and emerging ones; will continue to put public health at risk and erode the quality of life of millions of people; and will deter workers and businesses from moving and staying in the region.

Please support the Great Lakes by voting against H.R. 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Skelding". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeff Skelding
Campaign Director