

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Great Lakes are national treasures powering our economy, providing drinking water to over 48 million people, and defining our region's way of life. These waters support jobs, commerce, agriculture, transportation, and tourism for millions of people across the country.

As Senators representing Great Lakes states, we thank you for signing into law the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and we ask that you work to ensure that the following projects of critical importance to the Great Lakes Region receive the funding they require.

- **Soo Locks**

The Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan serves as a gateway to transport nearly 80 million tons of goods and raw material that supply the region's manufacturing, mining, and agricultural industries. The Soo Locks facility currently consists of four parallel locks: the Poe, the MacArthur, the Sabin, and the Davis. However, only the Poe and MacArthur locks are operational, and only the 1,200-foot Poe is of sufficient size for the passage of the vessels that carry 70% of all iron ore between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.

It is for this reason that an unscheduled outage of the Poe Lock would devastate the regional and the national economies, harm our manufacturing sector, and threaten our national security. The June 29, 2018, Economic Validation Study and Post Authorization Change Report for the Soo Lock project noted that "the strategic importance of the Soo Locks cannot be overstated." And a report by the Department of Homeland Security concluded it was "hard to conceive" of a single piece of infrastructure more consequential in terms of impact to the economy from an unexpected and sustained closure.

Building a second Poe-sized lock will provide the resiliency needed to ensure this critical infrastructure remains open for commerce, and work on this project – spearheaded by the Army Corps of Engineers – is already underway. As you know, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides \$11.6 billion in construction funds to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Given the importance of the Soo Lock project to the Great Lakes region and the national economy as a whole, we urge you to provide in Fiscal Year 2022 the full amount of funding needed to complete the Soo Locks project. Providing this funding up front will not only ensure the project's timely completion, but also reduce its overall cost.

- **EPA Areas of Concern (AOCs)**

The Great Lakes face serious and urgent threats as decades of environmental damage threaten public health, economic development, and the waters we all rely on. This legacy of pollution is no more clearly felt than in sites of extreme toxic contamination and environmental degradation known as Areas of Concern (AOCs). These 31 sites found across the region, together with degraded former industrial sites or brownfields, are significant impediments to community and economic revitalization. The threats they pose have too often disproportionately impacted our most vulnerable low-income, tribal, and communities of color.

Through the Great Lakes Legacy Act, supplemented by the GLRI, the EPA has successfully accelerated the restoration of AOCs. Since 2004, the EPA has mobilized strong collaborative partnerships with states, federal agencies, municipalities, and businesses while leveraging millions of dollars from non-federal sponsors to clean up six of these sites.

Over the next 5 years, the agency has identified construction and restoration projects likely to move forward across 14 AOCs requiring an estimated \$1.5 billion in federal funding, potentially leveraging over \$650 million in non-federal investment. Without an increased federal commitment, this potential could go unmet as existing funding trends are estimated to only meet a third of the identified federal need in the coming years, prolonging public health threats and delaying community and economic revitalization.

As such, we ask that your Administration allocate sufficient funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to enable EPA to complete its work on cleaning up the next set of Areas of Concern.

- **GLMRIS Brandon Road Study – Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED)**
The USACE is undertaking multiple efforts to stop invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes. These actions are critical to protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem and our \$7 billion recreational fishing industry, \$16 billion boating industry, and \$6 trillion regional economy.

On December 29, 2020, USACE and the State of Illinois signed a design agreement to complete Pre-Construction Engineering and Design (PED) for a comprehensive suite of measures to counter invasive carp at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, a critical choke point to halt the spread of invasive species in the Illinois River. At present, the electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is the only structural measure to deter invasive carp from reaching Lake Michigan, which would result in irreparable damage in the Great Lakes.

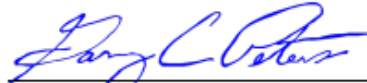
To prevent invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes now and in the future, we urge you and your Administration to allocate sufficient funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to cover the entire federal contribution for Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) at Brandon Road.

Thank for your consideration of these requests. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your Administration to ensure the lasting health of our Great Lakes.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator