



December 07, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition and our more than 170 community, state, regional, and national member organizations we write to offer our support for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) agreement included in H.R. 7776. We appreciate this bipartisan effort to fund and address water infrastructure needs across the nation and in the eight-state Great Lakes region, strengthening the resiliency of our communities and enhancing restoration of the Great Lakes.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) plays a significant role in helping Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin protect and restore the Great Lakes. From projects like the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study that investigates opportunities to improve coastal resilience, to the electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal that helps prevent aquatic invasive species from entering the Great Lakes, to others like the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program, Army Corps investments are helping our region protect our environment and grow our economy.

This bill continues to enhance the Army Corps work in the Great Lakes, the agreement:

- Modifies the federal cost-share for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project from 80 percent to a 90 percent federal in recognition of the regional importance of the project. Essential to block the spread of invasive carp, it is critical that the Army Corps advance construction without delay to protect the region's aquatic ecosystem, fishery, and the outdoor recreation economy.
- Authorizes the development of a suite of models to inform Great Lakes community resilience planning and mitigation, enhancing lake level forecasting, accounting for the impact of our changing climate on lake level variability and the growing threat of extreme weather events.
- Expedites the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, a key initiative investigating opportunities to improve community and coastal resiliency across the region.
- Enhances the benefit of the Advance Measures program, enabling the Army Corps to assist communities reduce the risk of damage caused by erosion due to high water levels in the Great Lakes region.
- Expands the Army Corps efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species through partnerships in the Lake Erie Basin.

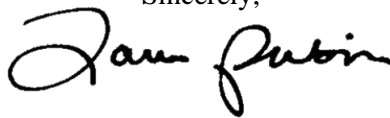
Moreover, the Coalition commends the efforts to enhance the Army Corps resiliency mission in the face of climate of change across the country and its recognition of the need to address the disproportionate impacts felt by our tribal and disadvantaged communities. These are important steps in protecting the communities most impacted by climate change and pollution, ensuring the benefits of Great Lakes restoration and resilience projects are enjoyed by all.

- Strengthens the resilience mission of the Army Corps, giving priority to the protection and restoration of shorelines, riverbanks, and streambanks to increase resilience and to protect communities from the damaging impacts of extreme weather events, such as flooding. The updated Shoreline and Riverine Protection and Restoration program will enhance the use of resilient and cost-effective nonstructural solutions for economically disadvantaged communities.
- Establishes a Tribal and Economically Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Committee to develop and make recommendations to more effectively provide assistance and implement projects and programs in these communities.

We appreciate Congress' efforts to advance the Water Resources Development Act in a bi-partisan manner, keeping this key legislation on its regular two-year cycle. We urge both chambers quickly move to consideration of this WRDA package that will enable the Army Corps to enhance the resiliency of key projects protecting our communities and improve the environmental restoration of the Great Lakes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Coalition's Policy Director, Chad Lord, at clord@npca.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Rubin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Rubin".

Laura Rubin
Director

Cc:

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
The Honorable Thomas Carper
The Honorable Sam Graves
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito