



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST COALITION

## GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

September 23, 2005

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration  
c/o U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Great Lakes National Program Office  
77 W. Jackson Boulevard (G-17J)  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3511

Dear Great Lakes Regional Collaborators:

We are very interested in ensuring that the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process results in recommendations that can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

Considerable effort has been devoted by hundreds of people toward drafting the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration strategy, and overall, we believe that the goals in the strategy are good but that additional detail is needed before the document is completed.

**Specific Action Steps:** We believe the final strategy needs to include more detailed action steps recommending specific legislative, implementation, or appropriation steps for the appropriate federal, state, local, and/or tribal government. The draft strategy includes primarily broad restoration goals for the relevant strategy team. Broad goals are important, but before Congress is likely to authorize new programs, the strategy needs to clearly state which agency is to implement a program and how it would specifically address a problem.

**Prioritization and Sequencing:** The final strategy recommendations need to be prioritized, and we need to have a clear set of short-term and long-term recommendations. Further, we need to know whether there is a sequence for successful project implementation. The needs of the Great Lakes are diverse and extensive ranging from ballast water measures to prevent the introduction of new aquatic invasive species to wetlands restoration to control measures for non-point source pollution. While all of the recommendations in the strategy are important and would certainly move the Great Lakes toward recovery, the draft strategy currently lists approximately 40 recommendations, many of which have multiple parts and are separated into the eight strategy team chapters. It is unclear which recommendations are higher priorities and which recommendation need to take place first.

**Measuring Progress:** The final recommendations should include a process to measure progress and to identify when success has been achieved. To ensure that resources are not wasted, it is important that the strategy include benchmarks to measure progress. Further, the recommendations must identify a defined and measurable end. For example, the strategy recommends restoring wetlands, but the strategy does not identify how many wetlands are currently within the Great Lakes basin, what type the existing wetlands are, or what type of

wetlands are a priority for restoration.

**Governance:** While some of the recommendations that were included in the strategy address which agency should implement a particular program component, the strategy does not address what agency or entity should lead the overarching restoration effort. As reflected in the congressional hearings of 2003 and 2004, there are many federal and non-federal restoration programs operating in the Great Lakes. Executive Order 13340 directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to take the lead among federal agencies in order to coordinate activities, but the strategy should recommend who has the overall responsibility for implementing the restoration initiative, whether a governing body will coordinate the implementation, what are the roles of federal and non-federal participants, and how projects will be coordinated to minimize overlap.

**Funding:** We have known that additional funding is needed for the Great Lakes from all levels of government. Though the draft strategy generally recommended funding levels to implement the recommended action, we are concerned that the strategy primarily addresses only federal funding and does not always address current levels of funding. Consequently, it is unclear whether the strategy is recommending “new” money or current levels of funding. We also recommend that additional guidance be included about non-federal spending.

We appreciate all of the hard work from everyone who has been engaged in the Regional Collaboration. We all have the same goal to protect the Great Lakes and look forward to continuing to work with you as the Regional Collaboration process moves forward.

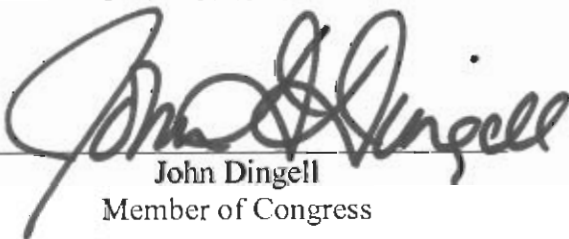
Sincerely,



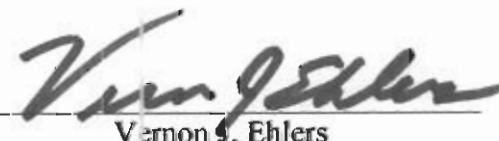
Mike DeWine  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



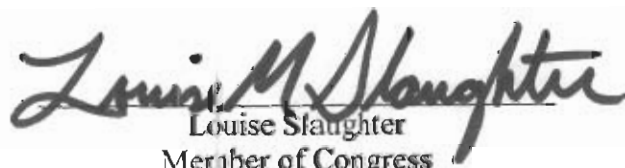
John Dingell  
Member of Congress



Vernon E. Ehlers  
Member of Congress



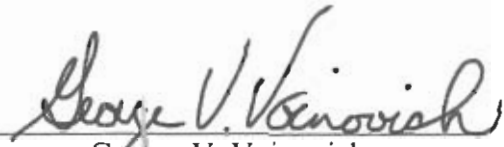
Mark Kirk  
Member of Congress



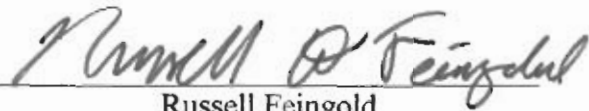
Louise Slaughter  
Member of Congress



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



George V. Voinovich  
United States Senator



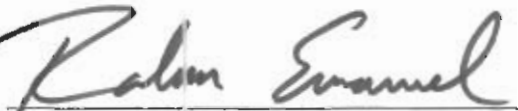
Russell Feingold  
United States Senator



Barack Obama  
United States Senator



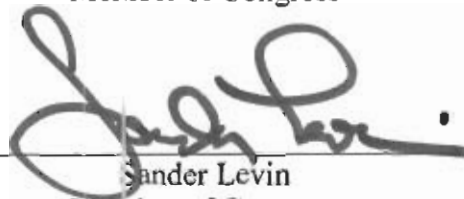
Norm Coleman  
United States Senator



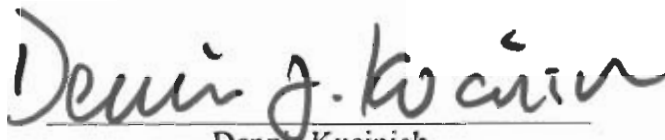
Rahm Emanuel  
Member of Congress



Steven LaTourette  
Member of Congress



Sander Levin  
Member of Congress



Dennis Kucinich  
Member of Congress