

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As Senators representing Great Lakes states, we request funding in FY2019 for the following programs that are of critical importance to the Great Lakes, which provide drinking water to over 40 million people and support 1.5 million jobs and \$62 billion in annual wages.

- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: No less than \$300 million.**

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) addresses the most serious threats to the Great Lakes, including toxic contamination, run-off pollution, and invasive species. GLRI funds help protect this ecosystem and address risks to public health.

We thank the Subcommittee for its longstanding support for the GLRI program and ask that no less than \$300 million be provided in FY2019, the same amount appropriated in several previous spending bills.

- **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund: No less than \$1.163 billion.**

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program is critical to ensuring safe drinking water for communities large and small. According to EPA's Drinking Water Needs Survey and Assessment, \$384.2 billion is needed over the next 20 years just to ensure minimum safe drinking water standards nationwide.

The crisis in Flint, where manmade decisions resulted in widespread exposure to lead laced water, is an extreme example of problems that exists nationwide. Some 5,300 American cities have been found to be in violation of federal lead rules, and aging water infrastructure systems are exposing the public to dangerous bacteria. In states such as ours, where aging drinking water systems are reaching the end of their service lives and population shifts are creating new burdens on ratepayers and our public utilities, there is an acute need for strong federal investments in drinking water infrastructure.

We strongly oppose requests to reduce funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund in FY2019 and ask the Subcommittee to provide no less than the amount appropriated in FY2018.

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund: No less than \$1.694 billion.**

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program provides critical funds to repair crumbling wastewater infrastructure. Tens of billions of gallons of untreated sewage and storm water enter the Great Lakes every year from aging wastewater systems. These releases threaten public health, impact environmental quality, and can slow economic growth. The CWSRF provides funding to stop the release of untreated sewage into our lakes and rivers and is essential to the long-term health and wellbeing of communities across the Great Lakes Basin.

We strongly oppose reducing funding for the CWSRF in FY2019 and ask the Subcommittee to provide no less than the amount appropriated in FY2018.

- **Brownfields Program: Above \$80 million.**

The Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields program drives economic growth by working with local communities to assess, clean up, and reuse contaminated property sites. This program helps convert liabilities into productive assets. As of January 1, 2017, the Brownfields program had assessed 25,296 properties, made 63,900 acres ready for reuse, leveraged 117,525 jobs, and raised \$22.612 billion in additional funding since the program's inception in 1995.

With its rich history of industrialization and manufacturing, the Great Lakes Basin has a proportionally greater share of brownfields compared to other regions of the country. The Brownfields program is a critical resource for restoring the tens of thousands of these sites in our states and revitalizing the communities around them.

We thank the Subcommittee for including a provision in the FY2018 omnibus that reauthorized the Brownfields program at \$200 million annually through FY2023, and for including provisions that should help more sites undergo cleanup activities. We ask that funding be provided in FY2019 that is above \$80 million to reflect the new authorization levels.

- **Office of Science and Technology: Above \$713.823 million.**

The Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Science and Technology is critical to strengthening our understanding of the environmental risks to human health and natural ecosystems, and to developing innovative solutions to address these problems. Within the Office of Science and Technology, the Science to Achieve Results program competitively funds research grants and graduate fellowships in numerous environmental science and engineering disciplines, engaging the nation's best scientists and engineers in targeted research to complement EPA's intramural research efforts.

We urge the Subcommittee to plus-up the Science and Technology account and specify that funding provided above FY2018 levels be dedicated towards research on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

- **Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances: Report Language.**

We urge the Subcommittee to include report language that encourages the EPA to establish National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for PFAS.

- **Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act: \$8 million.**

The Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (GLFWRA) supports a partner driven process to fund critical fish and wildlife projects in the Great Lakes Basin. By enabling regulators from Great Lakes states to recommend recipients of GLFWRA funding to the Fish and Wildlife Service, this program exemplifies a cooperative federalism approach that successfully addresses complex ecological challenges. Since the program's establishment, the Fish and Wildlife Service has selected locally driven projects that have established ecosystem management tools; restored wetlands and aquatic habitat; and advanced fish and wildlife monitoring and modeling.

In 2016, Congress adjusted the authorization level for this program to \$8 million. Unfortunately, funding for this program is consistently well below that amount. In the last two fiscal years, the program has received less than \$500,000. We ask the Subcommittee to significantly increase funding for GLFWRA in FY2019, ideally to the authorized amount of \$8 million.

- **Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Aquatic Invasive Species: \$11.4 million for combatting Asian carp.**

The Fish and Wildlife Service's Aquatic Invasive Species program supports the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices' basin-wide efforts to combat aquatic invasive species, including Asian carp. This work helps assess the threats posed by Asian carp to the Great Lakes and enables collaboration to detect and respond to new invasive species.

We ask the Subcommittee to provide \$11.4 million to the Aquatic Invasive Species program to support invasive species early detection efforts by the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices.

- **Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Population Assessment and Cooperative Management: \$33.7 million.**

The Population Assessment and Cooperative Management program supports critical work to restore Great Lakes fisheries and inform management decisions through sound science. This includes the Great Lakes Mass Marking Program, which is essential to assessing hatchery production and supporting a robust fishery.

We ask the Subcommittee to provide \$33.7 million to the Population Assessment and Cooperative Management program to support these efforts.

- **Fisheries, Aquatic and Endangered Resources: \$20.136 million.**

The U.S. Geological Survey's Aquatic and Endangered Resources program supports the Great Lakes Science Center, which works to enhance our understanding of the Great Lakes' complex ecosystem through studies and collaboration with a wide range of partners.

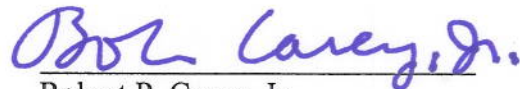
We ask the Subcommittee to provide \$20.136 million to the Aquatic and Endangered Resources program to support the work of the Great Lakes Science Center.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support for these important programs and thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Suntag with Senator Stabenow's office at 224-0839.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



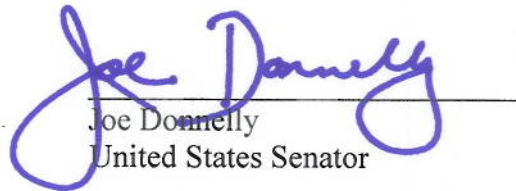
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



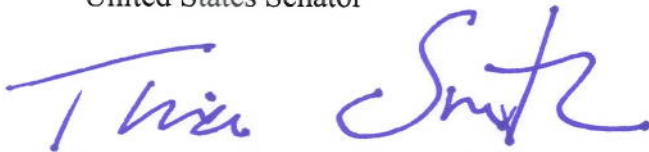
Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator