



# President Obama Signs Great Lakes Restoration Initiative into Law

*Historic Initiative Propels Restoration, Economic Recovery Forward*

**ANN ARBOR, MICH. (November 5)**—President Obama signed into law on Friday a historic \$475 million initiative to address urgent threats to the Great Lakes—the largest supply of surface fresh water in the world.

“With one stroke of his pen, President Obama has propelled Great Lakes restoration and economic recovery forward,” said **Jeff Skelding, campaign director of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition**. “This is a great day for anyone who cares about clean beaches, safe drinking water, and abundant fish and wildlife populations. This is a victory for the millions of people, businesses and communities which rely on the Great Lakes for their jobs, drinking water and way of life.”

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will receive \$475 million as part of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Act of 2010. The new initiative will nearly double funding for lake restoration programs in the eight states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The initiative invests in solutions to stop aquatic invasive species that cost the region at least \$200 million annually in damage and control costs; clean up contaminated sediments that pose a threat to the health of people and wildlife; and restore wetlands and other habitat that protect water quality, prevent flooding and provide the foundation of the region’s outdoor economy.

President Obama proposed the \$475 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in his inaugural budget to uphold a commitment he made as a presidential candidate to invest \$5 billion to restore the lakes.

“President Obama’s commitment to the Great Lakes,” said Skelding, “is starting to pay dividends.”

“The Great Lakes delegation at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue got this done,” continued Skelding. “There are so many people whose leadership we want to applaud starting with our Great Lakes leaders like Chairman Obey and stalwarts like Sens. Levin and Voinovich. What they’ve done is provide a significant down-payment in what we hope to be a sustained commitment to protect and restore the largest surface freshwater

resource on the planet. Our job now is to roll up our sleeves and get to work. We know what needs to be done. Now it's time to do it.”

The U.S. Congress funded the initiative, led by Sens. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), George Voinovich (R-Ohio), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.); and House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.), along with Reps. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), John Dingell (D-Mich.), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Steve LaTourette (R-Ohio), Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.), Vern Ehlers (R-Mich.) and Congressional members from the Great Lakes states serving on House and Senate appropriations committees and Great Lakes Task Force.

U.S. House Appropriations Committee members from the eight-state Great Lakes region include: Reps. Obey, Chaka Fattah (D-Penn.), Maurice D. Hinchey (D-N.Y.), Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D-Ill.), Steve Israel (D-N.Y.), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Carolyn C. Kilpatrick (D-Mich.), Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), Steve LaTourette (R-Ohio), Nita M. Lowey (D-N.Y.), Betty McCollum (D-Minn.), John P. Murtha (D-Penn.), Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), José Serrano (D-N.Y.) and Peter Visclosky (D-Ind.).

Senate Appropriations Committee members from the region include Sens. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Arlen Specter (D-Penn.), and Voinovich.

The Brookings Institution found that the eight-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin stands to gain at least \$2 in economic benefit for every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration.

“The Obama Administration and Congress are making a solid investment in the economy and environment,” said Skelding. “The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative establishes a solid foundation on which our nation and region can continue to invest the necessary funds and enact the necessary policies to restore and protect our lakes, boost our economy, safeguard our public health, and uphold our way of life.”

The Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives Campaign is directed by the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition. The coalition is co-chaired by the National Wildlife Federation and consists of more than 100 environmental, conservation, outdoor recreation organizations, zoos, aquariums and museums representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

For more information, visit: <http://www.healthylakes.org/>

**For Immediate Release:**

November 5, 2009

**Contact:**

Jordan Lubetkin, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 734-887-7109  
Jeff Skelding, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 410-245-8021  
Chad Lord, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 202-454-3385