



Great Lakes Restoration, Economy Poised To Get Big Boost from U.S. Congress

ANN ARBOR, MICH. (October 28)— Yesterday U.S. House and Senate leaders concluded negotiations over funding levels for environmental and natural resource agencies, setting the stage for a precedent-setting boost of \$475 million to address some of the most urgent threats to the Great Lakes—the largest supply of surface fresh water in the world.

As part of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Act of 2010, Congress is poised to appropriate \$475 million to fully fund President Obama's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The President proposed the initiative in his inaugural budget to invest 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 protects water quality, prevents flooding and is the foundation of the region's outdoor economy.

The appropriations bill is expected to pass Congress later this week. **Jeff Skelding, campaign director for the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition,** said:

"Today's action sets the stage for action that will benefit the millions of people, businesses and communities which depend on the Great Lakes.

"We applaud the support of the U.S. Congress to pass a bill that will allow our nation to roll up its sleeves and get to work restoring the largest fresh-water resource in the world.

"This down payment for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative provides a tremendous boost to advance Great Lakes restoration and economic recovery.

"Restoring the Great Lakes will not happen over night; this establishes a solid foundation on which President Obama and the U.S. Congress can build so that the nation invests the necessary funds and passes the necessary policies to restore and protect our Great Lakes, our economy, and 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/>

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Contact:

Jordan Lubetkin, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 734-887-7109

Jeff Skelding, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 410-242-2704

Chad Lord, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, 202-454-3385