

House Government Oversight

Written Proponent Testimony: House Concurrent Resolution 14

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony as a proponent of HCR 14, which will urge the United States Congress to pass the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Act of 2024.

The Nature Conservancy supports the passage of HCR 14 to protect and restore one of the most important natural resources our state has – Lake Erie. Not only is this precious resource a major economic driver in Ohio – bringing in an estimated \$2.2 billion in tourism and over 13,000 tourism jobs each year – it is also a source of drinking water for 3 million Ohioans and 11 million people in the US and Canada. In addition to the benefits it provides to humans, Lake Erie is the most biologically productive of all the Great Lakes and as such, is crucial to preserving the biodiverse ecosystems that call this region home. Beyond Ohio and Lake Erie, the Great Lakes are the largest source of freshwater on the planet. At a time when parts of this country are facing increasingly strained freshwater resources, it is crucial that we conserve the bountiful reserve of water that we have right in our backyard. HCR 14 is a way for Ohio to show our state's commitment to being responsible stewards of the resources we have been blessed with.

The GLRI Act has strong bipartisan support from Ohio's Congressional delegation due to its positive impact on our state. Ohio Congressman David Joyce is primary sponsor of the U.S. House version of the GLRI Act of 2024, and Congressman Max Miller, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Congresswoman Joyce Beatty, and Congresswoman Emilia Sykes cosponsor the bill. In the U.S. Senate, both Senator J.D. Vance and Senator Sherrod Brown cosponsor the Senate version of the bill.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization with chapters in all 50 states and projects in over 70 countries. We are a non-partisan, science-based organization that seeks to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work collaboratively with other conservation organizations, farmers, businesses, sportsmen groups, governments, and local communities to develop pragmatic solutions to conservation challenges, including land conservation, water quality, and climate change. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters, and we own and manage over 20,000 acres of nature preserves throughout the state.

The Nature Conservancy respectfully urges you to pass HCR 14 to proudly affirm Ohio's commitment to protecting and restoring the most important source of freshwater in our state and on the planet. Thank you for your time, and please feel free to reach out with questions.

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The Nature Conservancy