



**Before the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
House Concurrent Resolution 14 – Urges Enactment of Great Lakes
Restoration Initiative Act of 2024
Sponsor Testimony by Representative Michael J. Skindell
November 19, 2024**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony with my joint sponsor Rep. Tom Patton on House Concurrent Resolution 14. This bi-partisan resolution urges Congress to support the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

On February 6, 2024, the bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force, in Congress, introduced the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Act of 2024. Currently the GLRI is set to expire in 2026, but this legislation would extend it through 2031. The proposed reauthorization will increase the appropriation level from \$475 million to \$500 million.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative supports projects that help clean up toxic hotspots, reduce harmful algal blooms, prevent the establishment and spread of invasive species, and restore habitats for fish and wildlife.

The GLRI was first launched and federally funded in 2010, and since then has been able to purposefully target the largest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and been able to fund over 4,000 restoration projects. According to the National Parks Conservation Association, every \$1 spent on GLRI, produces \$3.35 of additional economic activity.

The Great Lakes are extremely important to our economy. According to the Great Lakes Commission, the lakes generate more than 1.5 million jobs and \$60 billion in wages annually. Additionally, the Great Lakes are a source of drinking water for 40 million people. For Ohio specifically, Lake Erie is an invaluable resource we rely heavily upon. Lake Erie alone drives millions of dollars in tourism, fishing, shipping, and agriculture.

We must have comprehensive solutions that will continue to protect our states' greatest assets. It is clear that the reauthorization of the restoration initiative is essential to protecting our Great Lakes and we must urge Congress to pass it with expedience. It is imperative that the Ohio General Assembly adopt this resolution before the end of the year.

In the Ohio House, H.C.R 14 passed 97-0. It has received broad support, including support from Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio Environmental Council, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Alliance for the Great Lakes, Ohio Marine Trades Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for your consideration of H.C.R. 14. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.