

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express the Ohio Marine Trades Association's (OMTA) support of House Concurrent Resolution 14. Founded in 1957 under the name the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association, we welcome boat dealers, marina operators, watercraft manufacturers, clubs, financial entities, other water-based organizations and the individual recreational boaters throughout the entire State of Ohio.

OMTA understand the critical importance of Lake Erie. It provides safe, clean drinking water for millions, is a key driver for Ohio's economy, not just for industry, but also the tourism economy. We must encourage the federal government to support the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. As a Great Lakes state, this body passing HCR 14, will send a clear message to Congress that they must act on this important Initiative.

ODNR recently did an economic impact study on recreational boating and their finding concluded that in 2022 there was a \$6.40 billion impact in Ohio, accounting for 45,856 jobs. We know that many boaters recreate on and around Lake Erie. It is important for the Lake to be clean, safe, and protected. We must not take a foot off the pedal and continue to address the Lake's harmful algae blooms and protect our native species so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

We encourage all members of our Ohio state and federal delegation in supporting Ohio most valuable natural resources, Lake Erie through of reauthorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024. Fishing, boating, swimming, lakefront and harbor towns all depend upon a healthy Lake Erie. The importance of restoration of our Great Lakes water cannot be underestimated. This legislation will improve our state's economy and provide for better quality of life for all Ohioans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michelle L. Burke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" and last name "Burke" clearly legible.

Michelle L. Burke
President, Ohio Marine Trades Association