



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST HOUSE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

January 8, 2021

Mr. RD James
Assistant Secretary of the Army
Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Mr. RD James:

We write regarding priorities for my district and the Great Lakes region as the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) develops its fiscal year (FY) 2021 work plan. The FY 2021 omnibus appropriations bill provides robust funding for your agency, including additional funding of \$1.8 billion above the budget request. The Corps is responsible for building and maintaining much of the water transportation and infrastructure across our nation. The expertise and tireless efforts of the Corps' dedicated workforce is essential to keeping our economy competitive in the 21st century, including in the Great Lakes region.

Regional Priorities

Asian Carp

In May 2019, the Corps sent Congress the Chief's Report for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, a critical chokepoint for keeping Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes. It is imperative that there be no further delays to moving this critical project forward. Additionally, section 402 of the recently enacted Water Resources Development Act of 2020 specifically authorized the construction phase of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project. Comprehensive report language also accompanied H.R. 133, Division D, which as enacted identifies the Brandon Road project and the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal Asian Carp Dispersal Array as congressional priorities.

To ensure the Brandon Road project proceeds, we ask that \$3,800,000 be included in the FY 2021 work plan, which is necessary to fund Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED). As you know, \$6,500,000 of additional funding was included in the FY 2021 appropriations bill within the Investigations account for ecosystem restoration projects in the PED phase that have been funded within the last three years, of which the Brandon Road project is one. We also encourage the Corps to expeditiously approve the design and advanced fund agreements.

Additional funding is also required for project management activities and structural measures, including the following for FY 2021:

- o \$14,200,000 above the President's budget request for construction of the second-high field array for the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal (CSSC);
- o \$315,000 for Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study program management; and
- o \$15,026,000 for operations and maintenance of the CSSC, which is \$725,000 above the President's budget request.

Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study

The Great Lakes coastline faces numerous threats, such as lake level fluctuations, erosion, flooding, nutrient runoff, and aging infrastructure. This year, record water levels as high as three feet above the long-term average have battered shores, spurred flooding, and damaged infrastructure. Notably, these highs come only six years after the Great Lakes experienced record-low water levels. Such rapid and unpredictable swings in water levels place enormous stress on coastal communities and regional economies.

This study, proposed in consultation with Great Lakes states, would be a first-of-its kind effort to develop a coordinated strategy to manage and protect the Great Lakes and its 5,200-mile coastline. The study has garnered robust and diverse support from a diverse group of Great Lakes states, which have agreed to serve as non-federal sponsor.

The America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 authorized the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study. We ask that you include not less than \$500,000 in the FY 2021 work plan for the study and select it as a new start to meet the requirement in the FY 2021 omnibus appropriations bill requiring the Corps to include a multi-purpose watershed study to address coastal resiliency.

Soo Locks

The importance of the Soo Locks to our national defense and economy cannot be overstated. To ensure continued, efficient progress in building the new lock, We ask that the work plan fully fund the FY 2021 capability, which is currently estimated to be \$137,200,000 above the budget request. This will help to ensure this critical project stays on time and on budget. As you know, \$59,200,000 of additional funding was included in the FY 2021 appropriations bill within the Construction account to continue to construct new navigation infrastructure for locks and Corps-owned bridges not on the inland waterways system, for which the Soo Locks can compete.

In addition, in order to ensure the safety of ships passing through the existing Soo Locks, and to ensure that the existing locks remain open for the movement of critical commerce, we ask that the work plan fully fund the FY 2021 capability, which is currently estimated to be \$37,300,000 above the budget request, for the Soo Locks Major Rehabilitation project. We will also note there is an additional \$61,555,000 in capability in the Operation & Maintenance account for the St. Mary's River at the Soo Locks and request the Corps allocate sufficient resources for this project. The St. Mary's River work at the Soo Locks can compete for additional funds from the "Navigation Maintenance," the "Deep Draft Harbor and Channel," "Other Authorized Project Purposes" additional funding in the Operation and Maintenance account.

Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER)

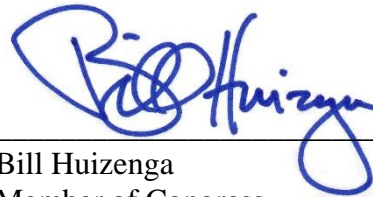
The FY 2021 omnibus appropriations bill provides \$25 million in additional funds for multistate ecosystem restoration programs, for which GLFER can compete. The GLFER program restores fish and wildlife habitat, removes dams and other barriers to fish migration, prevent and control non-native species, and contribute to the removal of beneficial use impairments in Areas of Concern. The program implements a number of projects across the Great Lakes Basin that have been developed in collaboration with a variety of federal, state and local partners. All proposed GLFER projects are reviewed by an expert committee to ensure feasibility, effectiveness, and consistency with state, tribal, local, and federal resource management objectives. We understand the Corps has a capability of \$10,000,000 for FY 2021 and ask that funding be included in the work plan for this important program.

We greatly appreciate your attention to the Great Lakes region as you work to complete the FY 2021 work plan. We look forward to continuing our work together.

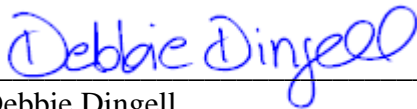
Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
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Democratic Co-Chair



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CC: Office of Management and Budget