

Maryland and generates \$3.4 billion in sales.

A clean and healthy Bay also supports a vibrant tourism and outdoor recreational industry. These industries in the watershed support over 820,000 jobs and \$13 billion in income.

EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program does important work in partnership with Bay States to control pollution and manage nutrient runoff into the rivers feeding into the Bay.

Through the Chesapeake Bay Program, we see the overall health of the Bay has improved significantly over the last 30 years. We are seeing better water quality, more rockfish, more blue crabs, more oysters, and the list goes on and on.

However, without continued collaboration among stakeholders and Federal support, progress in the Bay is indeed threatened. With today's actions, we are one step closer to ensuring that the Chesapeake Bay remains the economic foundation of our region that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

We all enjoy the Bay, whether we are in the Bay watershed or outside the Bay watershed. It really is, indeed, a national treasure.

If you look and think about the Bay, the workboats that you see there on a daily basis, the great way of life of folks in these waterside communities, it really is, I think, incumbent upon all of us to work hard and make sure we continue, not just to preserve the Bay, but make sure we see the Bay improve in water quality.

It plays an important role in my family. My son is a commercial fisherman, what we call in our area, a waterman, so he lets me know on a daily basis what is right and what is not right with the Chesapeake Bay, and encourages me to make sure we are doing everything we can to continue as good stewards of that fantastic resource, to make sure it continues to provide for those people that make their living off of the water; but also provides for the quality of life of those folks that live in the watershed, and continues to be a national treasure.

Even today under the stress, it is, indeed, one of the most productive water bodies in the entire world. If we continue on this path of improving the water quality there, I believe it can be even more productive and provide even more economic value, as well as just that intrinsic value that it provides to all of us; not just those in the watershed but to us as a Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure and continuing the vital work of saving the Chesapeake Bay.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to inquire if my colleague is ready to close.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to close.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to think of what Mr. WITTMAN and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle stated; that this Chesapeake Bay, it is a tremendous resource to our Nation, recreational opportunities, the shipping opportunities in it, never mind the wonderful seafood.

I urge support of this bipartisan piece of legislation by all Members, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I am glad that this bill gets bipartisan support from Members of Congress and I intend to support the bill. I urge all my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1620, the Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization Act. I commend my colleague and fellow Virginian, Congresswoman ELAINE LURIA, for introducing this bill which will further the Chesapeake Bay's ongoing restoration. As a co-chair of the bipartisan Chesapeake Bay Task Force, I recognize the critical role that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and it's Chesapeake Bay Program play in coordinating the multi-state restoration effort. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Deterioration of the Bay and how to best address the problem has been a concern for almost half a century. While serving as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, I was part of a joint Virginia-Maryland legislative advisory commission focused on determining what actions were necessary to address Bay issues. We concluded that restoring the Bay would require more than just Virginia and Maryland, but rather, the collaboration of the entire 64,000 square-mile watershed.

The EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, which was created during the Reagan Administration and ratified by Congress in 1987, facilitates the cooperation between the watershed states and the federal government to restore the Bay. Re-authorization of the critical Chesapeake Bay Program is long overdue.

Increases in underwater grasses and the blue crab population indicate our efforts are working, however more resources and continued coordination efforts are necessary to ensure that these gains are maintained and that the Chesapeake Bay is protected. The Total Maximum Daily Load, sometimes referred to as a "pollution diet," was established in 2010 and is a key part of the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program and the EPA's role in establishing and enforcing those limits are an essential part of the ongoing restoration process.

The Chesapeake Bay is a national commercial, recreational, ecological treasure and we have a moral responsibility to preserve it. I commend the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for reporting this bill favorably to the full House and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1620, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE ACT OF 2019

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4031) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4031

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019" or the "GLRI Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 118(c)(7)(J)(i) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1268(c)(7)(J)(i)) is amended—

(1) by striking "is authorized" and inserting "are authorized";

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) by striking "this paragraph \$300,000,000" and inserting the following: "this paragraph—

"(I) \$300,000,000"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(II) \$375,000,000 for fiscal year 2022;

"(III) \$400,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;

"(IV) \$425,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

"(V) \$450,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and

"(VI) \$475,000,000 for fiscal year 2026.".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4031.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4031 would reauthorize Federal appropriations for EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Introduced by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE), H.R. 4031 authorizes total appropriations of approximately \$2.5 billion over the next 5 years for restoration efforts under EPA's GLRI program. The wide support for this bipartisan program is evidenced by the diversity of cosponsors of the bill, including many of the committee members, such as Mr. GIBBS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. KATKO, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. GALLAGHER, and Mr. STAUBER.

The Great Lakes region encompasses eight different States and is home to more than 30 million people. These

waters are a national treasure and contain 84 percent of the fresh water of all North America.

As a Representative of a State where the availability of water is always, always an issue, I recognize why the Great Lakes Members are so devoted to protecting the water supply. So are we. Congress needs to renew its commitment to these types of programs which protect and restore our Nation's water.

We all know the current challenges facing our States to protect our water resource, including harmful effects of algal blooms. Many of our States are dealing with these challenges as we speak, and the Great Lakes are no exception. One such bloom in 2014 forced a drinking water ban that affected half a million people.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has been a critical tool for EPA and Great Lakes States to address ongoing challenges on local water quality, including algal blooms. So H.R. 4031 is necessary to support these efforts.

I urge all Members to support this very bipartisan bill to continue efforts for rehab on our precious Great Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support from: Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the National Audubon Society, and Healing Our Waters Great Lakes Coalition.

BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS,
Missoula, MT, September 18, 2019.

Hon. PETER DEFAZIO,
Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Washington, DC.

Hon. SAM GRAVES,
Ranking Member, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DEFAZIO AND RANKING MEMBER GRAVES: On behalf of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), the fastest growing organization that represents sportsmen and women in North America, I encourage you to support House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and floor passage of Rep. Elaine Luria's (D-VA) Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1620) and Rep. David Joyce's (R-OH) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act (H.R. 4031).

Over the last decade the health of the Bay's ecosystem has improved. However, with increased rainfall in the region and the amount of sediment, phosphorous, debris and nitrogen eroding into the Chesapeake watershed, the water quality is on the decline.

H.R. 1620 reauthorizes an important conservation and restoration program that safeguards the Chesapeake Bay watershed and increases the funding level to \$90 million for fiscal year 2020 and grows by \$500,000 each year until fiscal year 2024. Lawmakers funded the Chesapeake Bay Program at \$73 million annually for the past few years. The additional funds will restore the health of the Bay and boost the regional economy that depends on it for agricultural and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The second bill, H.R. 4031 reauthorizes funding to conserve and restore the Great Lakes, the largest bodies of fresh water in the world by incremental increases of \$25 million annually until fiscal year 2026. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is a successful program that strategically targets critical areas through multiple action plans and public input. Increasing funds will furthermore expand fish and habitat rehabilitation and implement collaborative projects

between federal, state and local stakeholders.

The Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes programs provide necessary federal investments that leverage state and local dollars to improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat for Canada geese, speckled trout and other game species. BHA believes H.R. 1620 and H.R. 4031 are essential to the health of fish and wildlife and the general public who depend on clean water for agriculture and municipal needs at home.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization Act and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act. We look forward to working with you to advance the legislation through the House.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. GALE,
Conservation Director,
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.

AUDUBON, NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS,
September 18, 2019.

Hon. PETER DEFAZIO,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

Hon. SAM GRAVES,
Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

Hon. GRACE NAPOLITANO,
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Washington, DC.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Washington, DC.

On behalf of the National Audubon Society's more than 1 million members, our mission is to protect birds and the places they need for today and tomorrow. We write to offer our support for the following bills related to important coastal and water conservation issues that will be the subject of the September 19, 2019 Markup before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

HR 4031—GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE
ACT OF 2019

The Great Lakes are home to 30 million people and 350 species of birds, but increasing challenges are on the horizon for the world's largest body of freshwater. Fluctuating water levels exacerbated by climate change, invasive exotic species and excess nutrients are putting even more stress on this ecosystem that is so important for birds and people. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has helped clean up toxic pollutants, protect wildlife by restoring critical habitat, and help combat devastating invasive species.

HR 4031 would increase funding for conservation projects to \$475 million over five years, by increasing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's authorization incrementally from \$300 million per year to \$475 million per year.

HR 1132—SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION ACT

The San Francisco Bay Area, home to the Pacific Coast's largest estuary, is also home to a rapidly growing population of 8 million people, and provides for a host of social and economic values through ports and industry, agriculture, fisheries, archaeological and cultural sites, recreation, and research. However, San Francisco Bay has lost 90% of its tidal wetlands and more than 50% of its eelgrass and mudflat habitat. Climate change exacerbates these conditions through drought that alters the salinity balance, ocean acidification that reduces species abundance and diversity, increasing water temperatures, and rising seas causing flooding that eliminates living shorelines and puts communities at risk. Many species of

waterbirds forage in the San Francisco Bay, including Brant Geese and Surf Scoters, underscoring the value of this ecosystem.

HR 1132 would authorize a San Francisco Bay Restoration Grant Program in EPA and funding of up to \$25m per year to support the restoration of this estuary.

HR 1620—CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM
REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Salt marshes are special places to birds and other wildlife, but sea level rise has elevated the waters in the Chesapeake Bay by one foot during the 20th century and is accelerating due to climate change. Salt marshes provide valuable "ecosystem services", including nurseries for the Chesapeake Bay's commercially important fish, a buffer protecting coastal communities against storm surge, a filter that stops nutrient and sediment pollution from entering the Bay, and a recreational resource attracting visitors who contribute millions of dollars to local economies. Chesapeake Bay's salt marshes host globally significant populations of both Saltmarsh Sparrow and Black Rail.

HR 1620 would increase the authorization of appropriations for the Chesapeake Bay Program to more than \$90m per year.

HR 2247—PROMOTING UNITED GOVERNMENT
EFFORTS TO SAVE OUR SOUND ACT

Despite significant investments in Puget Sound ecosystem health by state, federal, tribal and local governments, concerned members of the public, and conservation organizations, progress towards ecosystem recovery targets remains slow. The number of marine birds wintering in Puget Sound has declined significantly in the last 30 years and migratory, fish-eating birds appear to be at the greatest risk.

HR 2247 would authorize up to \$50 million in funding for Puget Sound recovery. The PUGET SOS Act also aligns federal agency expertise and resources, ensuring that federal agencies are coordinated, setting goals, and holding each other accountable will help increase their effectiveness and provide a boost to Puget Sound recovery.

HR 3779—RESILIENCE REVOLVING LOAN FUND ACT
OF 2019

Pre-disaster planning can help communities adapt to the changing flood patterns that threaten people and birds species dependent on shoreline and riverine areas. These changes have led to more frequent instances of "nuisance flooding," as well as catastrophic events. NOAA has found that "nuisance" or "sunny day" flooding is up 300% to 900% than it was 50 years ago. In addition, catastrophic flooding events have increased in both frequency and intensity. These trends have been particularly pronounced in the Northeast, Midwest and upper Great Plains, where the amount of precipitation in large rainfall events has increased more than 30 percent above the average observed from 1901-1960. As sea level rise accelerates, it only exacerbates these impacts, which further compounds vulnerability in flood-prone communities.

HR 3779 would amend the 1988 Stafford Act to offer low-interest loans to states for "disaster mitigation projects", including investments in natural infrastructure projects, which would help communities prepare and recover from natural disasters.

We urge you to support and advance the bills listed above. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,
JULIE HILL-GABRIEL,
Vice President, Water Conservation,
National Audubon Society.

HEALING OUR WATERS, GREAT LAKES
COALITION,
December 3, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, I write to urge the House of Representatives to bring to the floor for consideration H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019, before the end of the year. The bill, which is led by Reps. David Joyce and Marcy Kaptur, has broad bipartisan support with 50 cosponsors almost evenly divided and was unanimously supported in the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee in September. The Great Lakes define our region's way of life, provide drinking water for over 30 million Americans, and is at the heart of a binational economy that is the 3rd largest in the world. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has been restoring these waters and protecting the health and well-being of those that rely on them.

H.R. 4031 reauthorizes the successful Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and helps meet the on-the-ground needs of communities by increasing the annual authorization over five years to \$475 million. Over the past decade the GLRI has improved lives across Great Lakes communities after decades of environmental damage threatened public health, the regional economy, and drinking water. The GLRI has allowed the 8-state region to undertake one of the world's largest freshwater ecosystem restoration projects. Since its inception, the initiative has resulted in economic returns of more than 3 to 1 across the region and made tremendous progress. For example, the GLRI has:

- Tripled the delisting of areas with extreme degradation (Areas of Concern or AOCs)

- Increased the remediation of environmental and public health impairments nearly sevenfold

- Doubled farmland acres under conservation, reducing nutrient and sediment runoff

- Invested in critical research and forecasting of toxic algal blooms

- Controlled and stopped the advance of invasive species

- Restored habitat connectivity to over 5,250 river miles

Even with these results, there is still much work to be done. Two-thirds of beneficial use impairments remain untreated across 19 AOCs, placing the health of communities at risk. Drinking water and coastal economies remain under threat from toxic algal blooms that have shut down entire water systems, as was seen in Toledo, Ohio in 2014. Invasive species, like Asian Carp, are knocking at the door of the lakes and threaten its \$7 billion fishery. Moreover, emerging contaminants and a changing climate continue to exacerbate the challenges we face, many of which disproportionately impact people that have historically borne the brunt of environmental injustice. This underscores the urgency for the GLRI to address these growing threats by working to ensure restoration investments lead to equitable outcomes for everyone in the region.

The GLRI has been an environmental and economic success, but much work remains. The region stands ready to continue this important federal partnership and ensure that all benefit from and enjoy these investments in restoration and protection.

Since 2004, the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition has been harnessing the collective power of more than 160 non-governmental organizations representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes. We are pleased to offer our support for this much-needed bill

and urge House leadership to bring the bill to the floor for a vote.

Sincerely,

LAURA RUBIN,
Director.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1400

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 4031. H.R. 4031 is a critical bill to reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an initiative near and dear to my heart and the Great Lakes Caucus.

The Great Lakes, as was noted, is the largest system of fresh surface water in the world. The GLRI, as it is known, has been a catalyst for unprecedented partnership between Federal, State, and local agencies for years to improve the ecosystem, to improve water quality, and to support the economy of the entire Great Lakes region and the Nation.

H.R. 4031 has broad and bipartisan support with nearly 50 cosponsors, and I am proud to be one of those cosponsors. I thank our Members for continued support for the restoration of our Great Lakes. This issue is very important to my district and many other Members' districts in our Congress here.

The Great Lakes have an incredible impact on our region's way of life that cannot be overstated. At one point in time when I was younger, we actually had a license plate that called Michigan the Water Wonderland because of the importance of the Great Lakes on our State.

States all along the Great Lakes rely on them as a freshwater resource, a driver of our local and national economy, and a world-renowned recreation destination. It impacts from Minnesota all the way to New York.

In my home State of Michigan, we have the most Great Lakes shoreline of any State, with more than 3,000 miles of our State shaped by four of the five Great Lakes. My district is nearly surrounded by the Great Lakes system.

The projects that the GLRI makes possible have a proven track record of success and impact in our communities.

Take the Marysville shoreline in Michigan's 10th District, my home district, as an example. The GLRI provided the funds to remove a failing seawall and replace it with a natural, sloping shore.

Additionally, further south of my district, the restoration of wetlands in the Harsens Island area provided habitat for waterfowl and fish that had been destroyed over the years.

These projects resulted in the creation of jobs in the region, habitat restoration for wildlife, and a pathway for people to walk along the river or the lake, to view and enjoy it. This is one of the countless examples that highlights the importance of the GLRI for Great Lakes communities like mine and throughout the region.

GLRI investments have delivered great outcomes, but there is more work to be done to protect our Great Lakes, including stopping the spread of invasive species, like Asian carp; protecting our drinking water, a critical and urgent need; and restoring habitat loss.

I have advocated for GLRI since I arrived here and recently spoke with the President about the importance of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. It is crucial that Congress continues to authorize this program that protects and restores the Great Lakes. It, like many other estuaries we have talked about today, is a national treasure that our country relies on for drinking water, commerce, and more.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4031 offers a chance to continue this support. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GARCÍA).

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative JOYCE and Chairwoman NAPOLITANO for their leadership on this matter. I rise today in support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act to protect and improve the health of the Great Lakes and directly benefit the surrounding region.

I hail from Chicago and the Nation's gold coast along Lake Michigan. We know how important a healthy Great Lakes system is. Lake Michigan is not only Chicago's primary drinking water source, it is part of the largest freshwater source in the world, our beloved Great Lakes. Lake Michigan is a tremendous recreational resource and economic asset for Chicago and the State of Illinois.

Longstanding concerns, like the potential of Asian carp migrating into the lake, underscore the importance of advancing this important legislation.

This bill will support many projects important to the region. Chicago public schools, for example, were able to install green infrastructure and new community space at four elementary schools. The project added 1.2 million gallons of onsite stormwater storage capacity to reduce stormwater runoff throughout Chicago.

In Beach Park, Illinois, a project helped stabilize and protect streambed habitat. This, in turn, reduced nutrient pollution, sediment runoff, and increased water quality in both Bull Creek and Lake Michigan.

This bill will provide a much-needed increase in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to support the continued restoration of coastal wetlands, the preservation of water quality, and the control of invasive species.

H.R. 4031 will protect the Great Lakes for future generations. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I thank Chairwoman NAPOLITANO and Representative JOYCE for advancing this important measure.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE).

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I rise today in support of my bill, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019.

First, I thank Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR and the 48 other Members from both sides of the aisle who cosponsored this important legislation. These Members come from each of the eight Great Lakes States, and they have been instrumental in advancing this bill to the House floor.

I also thank my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee who unanimously supported the GLRI Act of 2019 during its markup back in September.

I cherish my memories growing up on the shores of Lake Erie, fishing and swimming with my family and friends. Everyone in this Chamber knows that I am not shy about my commitment to protect and restore the Great Lakes, for both current and future generations of Americans.

The Great Lakes are a key economic driver for our Nation. More than 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the lakes, generating \$62 billion in wages annually. That is not to mention the fact that the Great Lakes Basin is home to more than 30 million people and that the lakes hold roughly 21 percent of the entire world's freshwater supply.

That is why I was proud to introduce this bill to authorize this critically important Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for an additional 5 years and increase the program's annual authorized funding level, ensuring communities across the Great Lakes region, including those in my own district of northeast Ohio, can continue to address their on-the-ground needs.

Through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, also known as GLRI, EPA coordinates its efforts with other Federal partners like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as State agencies, local communities, and non-profit organizations.

GLRI projects have led to significant environmental benefits in the Great Lakes region since the program was created, helping restore more than 50,000 acres of coastal wetlands and reduce nutrient runoff that leads to harmful algal blooms like the one that shut down Toledo's water system in 2014, impacting hundreds of thousands of Ohioans.

The program also provides for a wide range of economic benefits, like protecting the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery from invasive species like the Asian carp.

In fact, a recent study showed that every dollar spent on GLRI projects through 2016 produces more than \$3 in additional economic activity in the region. This means jobs and economic development in waterfront communities

like Mentor, Ashtabula, and Conneaut, Ohio.

Simply put, without the GLRI, critical environmental restoration activities and strong economic growth would never have happened. The bill is a great example of the progress we can make when we work together to address the issues facing our communities.

While we have made progress in our efforts to address nearshore health, invasive species, toxic substances, and wildlife habitat, much more work remains to be done to protect the Great Lakes. That is why I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4031, working across party lines to protect the invaluable natural resource and economic powerhouse that is the Great Lakes system.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS).

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly support this bill, which would increase funding to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to \$475 million by the year 2026.

This funding is essential to the health of the Great Lakes. We have made incredible progress to restore plant and animal habitats, control invasive species, combat harmful algal blooms, improve water quality, and clean up the environment of this region.

The revitalization of the Buffalo River in my district, which was once declared ecologically dead, environmentally destroyed, it is now a destination for nature and recreation and is one of the great success stories of this program.

It has yielded impressive economic benefits. Every \$1 in funding generates \$3.35 in economic activity. In Buffalo, the number is greater than \$4.

Attacks on clean water now threaten the progress that we have already made, and there is still much work left to be done. I urge my colleagues to join me in enthusiastically supporting this bill.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS).

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, no question, the Great Lakes are an important environmental and economic resource of the United States—\$200 billion in economic activity. So many communities rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water, jobs, recreation, and more.

While the Great Lakes may have had a troubled environmental history, recent restoration and protection efforts have been successful.

The GLRI is a major factor in these efforts, funding projects that will ultimately leave the Great Lakes in a better condition for future generations to enjoy.

Several years ago, when I was chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction, we had some concerns, so in our oversight responsibility and to protect taxpayer dollars, I requested the GAO do a study of this program, and it came back with an excellent return. That is why I think we are getting some of these returns about what is going on. Also, it is important that that study gave us some helpful ideas to improve the program. We are seeing that today, and the program is working very well.

I feel good that we did that study, and we know what is going on. We know the taxpayer dollars are protected, and we did our oversight role.

Ohio is home to many important projects funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: State commissions to reduce phosphorous, Asian carp prevention, and various habitat restoration projects. The GLRI remains an essential element in repairing and preserving the Great Lakes.

I thank my colleague from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE) for sponsoring this bill. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 4031.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I am so very pleased to rise in support of this bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and strengthen the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the GLRI.

Twenty percent of the world's freshwater resides in the Great Lakes. It is a national treasure and a regional economic engine.

I remember when I was first elected in 2004. On election night, I was so excited because I said now I get to represent Lake Michigan. It is one of my favorite constituents.

In its mere one decade of existence, the GLRI has not only generated environmental benefits, but it is helping to generate economic development as waterways that were once polluted, unusable, and off-limits to the public have become attractive to not only recreational users but to businesses that are able to open their doors to the public.

GLRI investments have been used in over 4,000 projects across almost 300,000 square miles of the Great Lakes Basin. It is truly a win-win.

Mr. Speaker, this bill takes the next step to support the ongoing efforts and partnerships that are making this program so successful in Great Lakes communities.

While I don't have much time, I want to highlight a couple of efforts that my constituents who are hard at work to make use of the funds that protect Lake Michigan. Here is one story of a small business owner.

Beth Handle is the owner and operator of Milwaukee Kayak Company, located right on the Milwaukee River in downtown Milwaukee. She came to my

office to share how cleaning up this river has benefited her business. Cleaning up the river changed the river from a place that people didn't want to go.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to Ms. MOORE.

□ 1415

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, cleaning up the river changed the river from a place that people didn't want to go, and now it is where families go to paddle board, swim, and explore the river and our city. Of course, Milwaukee is A Great Place on a Great Lake.

The Milwaukee Water Commons, while not directly funded by the GLRI, has been working with grantees and others to make sure that communities that have been historically disengaged are in those conversations.

Our Metropolitan Sewerage District is using it to clean up the Milwaukee Estuary, where there is a gathering of three rivers: the Kinnickinnic, the Milwaukee, and the Menomonee Rivers. This estuary is one of 30 areas of pollution concerns in the Great Lakes. The GLRI would fund 65 percent of these projects.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I am so delighted that we are debating it here on the floor in this bipartisan manner.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), my colleague.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act.

GLRI is a vital program that coordinates Federal efforts among 15 agencies to address the most significant challenges facing the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes are among our most precious natural resources and a key economic driver in my home State of Indiana. For instance, the recreational boating industry alone provides \$2 billion to Indiana's economy each year. Yet the environmental and economic health of our region is under threat from a host of issues facing the Great Lakes, including pollution, severe erosion, loss of native habitat, invasive species, and destructive algae blooms.

GLRI is a critical investment in preserving and protecting the Great Lakes as well as creating jobs and growing our economy. That is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 4031, which would reauthorize the program funding through fiscal year 2026.

Protecting and improving the Great Lakes means making sure current and future generations can experience the natural beauty and the recreational activities like fishing, boating, and hiking that have always been important to our part of the Midwest.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representatives JOYCE and KAPTUR for

their hard work on this bipartisan legislation. I also want to thank my fellow Hoosier, Congressman PETE VISCLOSKEY, for his decades of service and his leadership in making the Indiana Dunes Indiana's first national park.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to protect the Great Lakes by voting for H.R. 4031.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 12 minutes remaining.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairwoman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee for yielding me this time, and I thank her for her unyielding support for water issues across this country, including in our very critical Great Lakes region. She has been a true and unyielding champion on these issues, and I thank her.

Today's package of bills includes key priorities for protecting not just our Great Lakes, but ecosystems across our country. H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019, enjoys broad support from the Great Lakes region. The 49 cosponsors of the bill represent every ideological perspective of our caucus, and today's bill, which is on suspension, is a testament of that bipartisan, bicameral critical support.

In that vein, Mr. Speaker, I must also commend my colleague from Ohio, Congressman DAVID JOYCE, for his steadfast effort to work collaboratively to collect signatures for H.R. 4031 so we could move it from 2019 to 2020.

This Great Lakes Act recognizes the enormous, unmet need for the region. The interagency collaborative effort has brought to bear resources, expertise, and stakeholders from across the local, State, and Federal portions of the region and helped to focus resources on a major hot spot.

The Maumee River is the largest river that flows into the entire Great Lakes and is also facing gigantic harmful algal blooms. The Maumee River dumps all of these nutrients into Lake Erie, which then feeds the most productive part of the lake, endangering, annually, native species and creating massive harmful algal blooms with the critical ingredient of microcystin, which is toxic.

Annually, the harmful algal blooms threaten Toledo's drinking water system, which had to be shut down 3 years ago. It threatens the safety of our beaches and longevity of our ecosystem.

This Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is assisting communities to address the root causes of the blooms.

Since 2010, over 4,000 projects have been completed across the basin, the largest watershed in the entire Great Lakes, and a recent University of

Michigan study revealed that each dollar spent on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will result in \$3.35 million in additional economic activity.

The long-term goals of the initiative are delisting of the areas of concern, ensuring that fish are safe to eat and the Asian carp is kept out, and control of numerous environmental problems across our lakes, the largest source of freshwater on our continent.

Today's legislation offers a ramp-up back to the level for the restoration initiative initially envisioned when the program was first funded in fiscal year 2010. So it is pretty new as Federal programs go. This gradual ramp-up represents a consensus across the delegation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation on final passage.

Again, I want to thank Chairwoman GRACE NAPOLITANO for her work across both sides of the aisle and with Members of this House from every region of the country.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), my colleague and the co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of continued preservation and restoration of the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a very important initiative for the Great Lakes system.

For Michiganders, the Great Lakes are directly linked to our identity, our way of life, our history, and our future.

The Great Lakes basin is home to more than 30 million people, and it contains 90 percent of the Nation's fresh surface water supply. Many know that, but they don't always understand the economic impact. That provides the backbone of a \$6 trillion regional economy.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has a strong track record of success, specifically in west Michigan, where the work to clean up toxic hotspots in areas like Muskegon is estimated to have increased property values by nearly \$12 million and generated \$1 million in new recreational spending. This holds true across west Michigan and the entire region, as every dollar invested in the GLRI generates more than \$3 in additional long-term economic activity.

The GLRI is critical to our efforts to protect drinking water, prevent the spread of invasive species, and to accelerate the cleanup of areas of concern.

With the threat of Asian carp inundating our waters, high water levels and erosion threatening our shorelines, and the ongoing threat of PFAS contamination contaminating our water, we must be committed to bipartisan solutions to protect this critical resource.

Recently, my Republican colleagues and I had an opportunity to spend some time with the President, and he recommitting his support for the GLRI and

towards the Great Lakes, as well as making sure that Brandon Road and other efforts to keep invasive species out are happening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, the GLRI is a bipartisan example of an effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars that protects, preserves, and strengthens the Great Lakes today and for future generations.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL).

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairwoman from California for yielding and for all of her hard work on this bill.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative—or the GLRI, as we all call it—Act of 2019, which will reauthorize the GLRI for 5 years and increase authorized funding for the program to \$475 million, annually, by fiscal year 2026.

Through the GLRI program, we have been able to clean up and delist environmental areas of concern. We have been able to restore coastal wetlands, as many of my colleagues have talked about, mitigate harmful algae blooms, combat invasive species, and do much more to help protect, restore, and maintain the Great Lakes ecosystems and strengthen our regional economy. And, as people have seen on the floor today, this issue has shared strong bipartisan support at all times.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for helping to educate the President on the importance of the GLRI.

The Great Lakes are not only a treasured natural resource, but a way of life that supports communities and jobs throughout the region. They are 21 percent of the world's freshwater supply.

Building on what my colleague from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) was talking about, my colleague, Ms. TLAI, and I were able to kayak on the Rouge River on the 50th anniversary of its having caught on fire. We were surrounded by industry, but we also saw bald eagles and herons, and she got the most beautiful picture of a painted turtle.

Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, I am proud to be an original cosponsor, and I thank my colleagues, Representatives DAVID JOYCE and MARCY KAPTUR, for their great leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important bill to ensure our Great Lakes are protected for all future generations.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the balance of time on both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), another colleague.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019, not just because my district has Lake Erie on its borders, but because of the impact of such a great proposal that has had bipartisan support and, now, thankfully, even as recently as just this last week, to talk with the President with my colleagues and know of his support as well.

The Great Lakes are something that we all treasure in Michigan, and they are central to our State's economy and way of life. As stewards of this natural resource, it is incumbent on us to take care of them so that future generations can enjoy their beauty, their bounty, and their economic benefits. That is why the bipartisan support for GLRI is so overwhelming.

For the past decade, the GLRI has been the driving force behind cleaning up and protecting the Great Lakes. Funds from this successful program go towards restoring wetlands, combating harmful algae blooms, stopping invasive species, and much, much more. With additional resources, we can accelerate and expand GLRI's impact even more for the citizens of not only our States, but of this great country.

I am proud to join my colleagues in this bipartisan effort to preserve the Great Lakes and continue it long into the future as beneficial for all who experience the greatness of what it is.

Let's pass this critical legislation.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act's reauthorization.

As has been mentioned before, I think, the Great Lakes represent 21 percent of the world's surface freshwater.

I am glad to see so many of my colleagues from the Great Lakes region here, but, really, all of us and the rest of the world have a stake in this.

The Great Lakes provide drinking water for 45 million Americans.

□ 1430

The lakes support one of the world's largest regional economies through agriculture, industry, fishing, and recreation.

For thousands of plants and animal species and millions of Americans, the Great Lakes are vital for life, and are our national treasure.

I wanted to say, this is really personal for me. The eastern border of my district, running from Chicago to the northern suburbs, is Lake Michigan. I live just a few blocks from the lake myself and have spent every summer of my childhood on the beach in Indiana enjoying the lake.

But we are threatened right now by climate change and pollution. Last year, the Midwest saw record flooding, worsening storms, harmful runoff, and toxic algae blooms that threaten drinking water and infrastructure.

Actually, we saw thousands of Americans who couldn't drink the water because of that algae bloom. And in my hometown of Evanston, beaches are closing or actually disappearing entirely because the levels of the lake are at record highs right now.

Just last month, these record water levels destroyed lakefront paths, and I was getting calls from condominium owners who were worried about their buildings getting—not demolished—but certainly damaged because of the high lake waters.

New estimates from the Army Corps of Engineers state that the lake levels could get even higher next year, and we are watching for that with great distress.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is absolutely essential to restoring the health and unpolluting the lake and protecting the grandeur of our lakes.

This is a bipartisan piece of legislation. People on both sides of the aisle are down here speaking eloquently about the meaning of the Great Lakes to them, and it is really refreshing, I think, for all of us to be able to join hands together asking for the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GONZALEZ).

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4031, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019.

First, I want to thank my good friends from Ohio, Mr. JOYCE and Ms. KAPTUR, for their leadership on this legislation. The Great Lakes are an essential natural resource, not only for my district and State, but for the entire country.

One of the world's largest bodies of fresh water, the Great Lakes provide fresh drinking water for over 30 million people. In addition, the Great Lakes serves as an economic engine, generating \$8.4 billion in wages, and supporting over 300,000 jobs.

But the Great Lakes are more than a source of revenue. Ask any of my constituents what the Great Lakes mean to them, and they will tell you they are an essential part of what makes northeast Ohio such a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Over the past decade, both Democrats and Republicans have understood the importance of protecting the Great Lakes. Since 2010, the GLRI has catalyzed critical restoration action that both restores and protects the Great Lakes. In fact, for every dollar spent under the GLRI, an estimated \$3.35 in economic activity is produced.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4031 and ensure the preservation of our waterways and ecosystems for future generations.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be able to speak on this initiative, given what is going on in the other house today where we have so much partisanship. This is the type of bipartisan work we should be doing.

I am honored to be a cosponsor of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. My district goes along Lake Michigan. I know it means so much for the communities of Port Washington, Sheboygan, Manitowoc and Two Rivers.

I would just like to clean up a little something here. I know a few years ago in 2013, there was a great deal of concern that the watermark in Lake Michigan was at an all-time low. People talked about climate change and how bad that was. It was good to report now in 2020 in January on the 30-year high on Lake Michigan. So maybe that is the reason for a crisis as well, but it is interesting to see how things kind of ebb and flow on Lake Michigan.

As previously has been said, about a fifth of the fresh water in lakes in the world is in Lake Michigan by itself. Lake Michigan is the fifth biggest lake in the world. We have had problems with invasive species, which is one of the major reasons why I am on this bill.

We want to keep the lakes clean not only for consuming water, but the fisheries, the fishing going on there is important, and recreation on Lake Michigan is important.

A lot of this money goes into the agriculture in places like Wisconsin. We do have to keep the lakes clean, and as we keep our farms clean, it results in less algae blooms and a healthier lake system.

So, in any event, I am honored to be a cosponsor on this. I am pleased that the Speaker has decided to put such a great bipartisan bill on the floor today.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Let me close with this: This bill passed committee with strong bipartisan support. As my colleagues have noted, including Mrs. WALORSKI, recreational use of the Great Lakes is an important component of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

As I close, I would like to quote the immortal words of country superstar, Craig Morgan. It is a little unusual, but I think it is appropriate today.

He said in a song:

I'm meetin' my buddies out on the lake
We're headed out to a special place we love
That just a few folks know
There's no signin' up, no monthly dues
Take your Johnson, your Mercury or your
Evinrude and fire it up
Meet us out at party cove
Come on in; the water's fine
Just idle on over, and toss us a line

Support reauthorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that this has such great bipartisan support. It truly is an amazing bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4031.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REAUTHORIZING LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4275) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4275

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION.

(a) REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Section 121 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1273) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (5), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (6), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(7) ensure that the comprehensive conservation and management plan approved for the Basin under section 320 is reviewed and revised in accordance with section 320 not less often than once every five years, beginning on the date of enactment of this paragraph.”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking “recommended by a management conference convened for the Basin under section 320” and inserting “identified in the comprehensive conservation and management plan approved for the Basin under section 320”.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 121(e)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1273(e)(1)) is amended by striking “, a 5,000 square mile”.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 121(f) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1273(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “2001 through 2012 and the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2009 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017” and inserting “2021 through 2025”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Administrator may use for administrative expenses not more than 5 percent of the amounts appropriated to carry out this section.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4275, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter in support of H.R. 4275 to reauthorize the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program from the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation.

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN
BASIN FOUNDATION,

February 4, 2020.

Re H.R. 4275: Support to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI & MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY: I would like to express our support for H.R. 4275—the reauthorization of the Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program within the Environmental Protection Agency. This program provides resources vital to the restoration of the ecological health of the Basin, as well as public education projects.

Although Lake Pontchartrain and its surrounding area continue to face environmental challenges, the Lake and its resources have made a tremendous comeback. Much of this success is due to interested and concerned citizens who want a clean, healthy Lake and Basin for this and future generations, all of which would not be possible without your support of this PRP funding.

Sincerely,

KRISTI L. TRAIL, P.E.,
Executive Director.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4275 will reauthorize EPA's Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program for the next 5 years.

Introduced by the gentlemen from Louisiana, Mr. GRAVES and Mr. RICHMOND, it reauthorizes the program for the next 5 years with continued funding of \$20 million annually over 5 years. It also caps EPA's administrative expenses at 5 percent.

At our June subcommittee hearing, we received testimony on current threats to the Lake Pontchartrain region and its watershed. Covering a 10,000-square-mile area, the basin faces