



February 1, 2008

The Honorable Gary Becker, Chair
Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
177 N. State Street, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mayor Becker:

Thank you for your recent questionnaire asking about my position on various Great Lakes issues of concern.

As a resident of the Great Lakes region, I understand the importance of this critical natural resource for our nation's economy, environment and public welfare.

I recently signed a copy of the enclosed pledge stating that, when I am president, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration – which includes recommendations that cover many of the questions in your request – will receive real support, real financial resources, and real leadership from the federal government. Likewise, with lake levels decreasing and demand for freshwater increasing, it is imperative that we have uniform, binding water use standards. As such, I support the bipartisan effort by governors and state legislatures in the Great Lakes region to pass the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. Finally, as president I will appoint the most qualified individuals to fill important agency positions, such as the International Joint Commission. Municipalities, as first responders, have an important role to play in the restoration of the Great Lakes. As such, municipal representatives have a unique and significant perspective in their management and perspective that is highly valued.

The Great Lakes are a resource for us to use and protect for our generation and future generations. As first responders, mayors and municipalities such as those in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative play an increasingly important role for the future of these magnificent natural treasures. Thank you for your important work.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama

Great Lakes Protection Candidate Pledge

I recognize that with 95 percent of the nation's fresh surface water, the Great Lakes are one of America's most precious natural resources, serving as a source of drinking water, jobs, food and recreation for more than thirty million Americans and a critical habitat for fish and wildlife. As such, the restoration of the Great Lakes is an essential national public health, security, economic and environmental imperative.

I recognize that today the Great Lakes suffer from serious threats such as toxic pollutants, sewer overflows, invasive species, water level reduction and contaminated sediment. These dangerous problems have led to illness, record beach closings and fish consumption advisories, habitat loss and billions of dollars in economic damage.

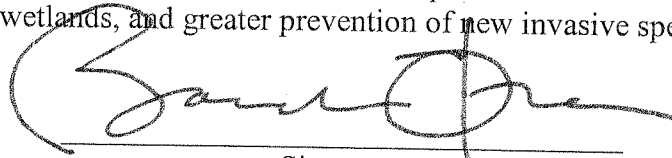
I recognize that investing in the restoration of the Great Lakes is not only sound environmental policy, but also has significant economic benefits for the region and the country.

Therefore, as a candidate for President of the United States of America, I,

Barack Obama

pledge to make Great Lakes restoration a priority within my administration by:

- Appointing a cabinet-level official to oversee and lead the implementation of the Great Lakes Collaboration Restoration Strategy and all Great Lakes restoration policies;
- Preparing an annual comprehensive interdepartmental Great Lakes restoration budget to effectively and efficiently address the problems facing the Great Lakes without duplication or waste; and
- Including significant funding in my annual budgets for the priorities outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy and future needs of the Great Lakes, such as fewer beach closures and sewer overflows, more clean up of toxic sediments, more restoration of wetlands, and greater prevention of new invasive species.



Signature

12-06-07

Date

Sign and return to:
Kirk for Congress
P.O. Box 8
Winnetka, IL 60093
Contact (224) 639-1070 with questions.

Paid for by Friends of Rahm Emanuel and Kirk for Congress

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