



January 19, 2022

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz:

On behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, I write in support of H.R. 5973, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2021.

The Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act authorizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to work in partnership with states, tribes, other federal agencies, and other partners to develop and implement proposals for the restoration of fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin. The program also assists Great Lakes fish and wildlife agencies to encourage cooperative conservation, restoration and management of the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.

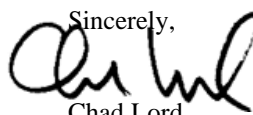
The Great Lakes are the largest surface freshwater system in the world. Together, these five lakes hold nearly one-fifth of Earth's surface freshwater. The lakes have over 10,000 miles of shoreline and over 30,000 islands. The watershed includes some of the nation's most fascinating wildlife, such as the gray wolf, moose, bald eagles, and Canada lynx. The lakes and their connecting channels are home to numerous fish like whitefish, walleye, and trout. Millions of migratory birds pass through the region each year.

Even with their immense size and diversity, the Great Lakes are vulnerable to pollution. Invasive species and polluted runoff are persistent threats and undermine native species food and habitat. Industrial development and U.S. settlement has also resulted in critical losses of fish and wildlife habitat. Coastal wetlands have been lost at astonishing rates. For example, according to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, Michigan has lost about 50 percent of its coastal wetlands that existed prior to European settlement.

Right now, the Great Lakes region is undertaking one of the largest restoration and protection efforts in the country. The Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act program contributes to the results the region is seeing because of sustained investment in restoring and protecting critical habitat throughout the basin. Ensuring the program can continue to support local, non-federal efforts in rebuilding critical fish and wildlife habitat is one key to protecting and restoring the economic engine and source of drinking water for over 30 million Americans.

The Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition supports H.R. 5973 and urges the Committee on Natural Resources to move the bill to the full House without delay.

Thank you for considering our views. Please contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 202.257.4365 or [clord@npca.org](mailto:clord@npca.org).

Sincerely,  
  
Chad Lord  
Policy Director