

**A2Y Regional Chamber statement supporting continued funding of the
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
April 27, 2017**

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is an important Federal initiative involving numerous departments and agencies with the design to “accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world, the Great Lakes.” It has significant environmental implications which are vital to the Great Lakes. The GLRI also has an equally significant impact on a number of economic and business efforts in the eight state Great Lakes region. In February the President proposed eliminating GLRI’s \$300M annual budget.

From 2010 to 2014 the GLRI provided roughly \$2.07M in funding for projects that were in, or impacted, Washtenaw County. These include efforts in local watersheds for the Huron River, River Raisin and Mill Creek, which provide among other things:

- Water quality restoration and protection
- Species protection
- Wildlife habitat restoration
- Invasive species mitigation
- Data collection
- Environmental protection capacity building

The State of Michigan derives numerous benefits from a healthy Great Lakes system. Among many others these include:

- Roughly 800,000 jobs that depend in some way on a healthy Great Lakes system;
- A \$4B fishing industry and a nearly \$13B tourism industry; and
- Water used in up to 60% of the nation’s steel production

The response in Congress to GLRI elimination was a bi-partisan push back. There is also a coalition of major businesses which oppose these cuts. The A2Y Chamber is part of the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition (composed of nearly 40 chambers of commerce in the Great Lakes states) which has taken a position supporting continued funding for the GLRI at roughly \$300M annually.

The A2Y Chamber supports Congressional efforts to protect funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and joins the growing coalition of business, environmental, and civic organizations that seek to ensure the GLRI remains fully funded at a \$300M annual level. This effort will help ensure the proper clean up and protection of the world’s largest system of fresh surface water, and help protect millions of American jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity that depend on a healthy Great Lakes system. The A2Y Chamber supports the bi-partisan efforts of Members of Congress, including Michigan’s two United States Senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, and Washtenaw County’s two United States Representatives, Debbie Dingell (MI-12) and Tim Walberg (MI-7), who have publicly supported continued funding of the GLRI.