Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2026

1The Honorable Mark Amodei
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
2006 Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar1
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Homeland Security
2006 Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

1Dear Chairman Amodei and Ranking Member Cuellar:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2027 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we write to request $250 million for procurement of a second U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) heavy icebreaker at least as capable as the USCG MACKINAW (WLBB-30) for the Great Lakes.

Heavy ice threatens the reliability of Great Lakes-Seaway transportation early and late in the navigation season. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for breaking ice to ensure navigation and enhance safety. An economic analysis of the 2018-19 ice season by Martin Associates illustrates that the U.S. economy lost more than $1 billion of economic activity that season and more than 5,400 jobs due to inadequate icebreaking. Severe winter ice not only delays shipping, but also can be a hazard to the safety of vessels and their crew. Severe winter weather is stressing these assets, and in 2015, Congress authorized the construction of a new heavy icebreaking cutter of similar capability as the USCG MACKINAW. In addition, we note that the National Defense Authorization Act of 2023 authorized $350,000,000 to complete the acquisition of the icebreaker. We will remain engaged, working towards adequate and responsible funding of the full authorization, to ensure that additional icebreaking capacity is brought online as soon as possible.

The USCG must be given the appropriate resources to acquire a second MACKINAW-class icebreaker on the Great Lakes to prevent additional damage to the economy. The federal tax revenue from preventing these economic losses with a new USCG icebreaker should easily cover the cost of building and operating of the vessel over its lifetime. The new ship is needed to connect our communities and ports, as well as facilitate critical shipping, mining, and USCG operations across the region.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support for funding the Great Lakes Icebreaker, as there is an urgent need for acquisition. To accompany our $250 million request, we ask the Subcommittee to include the following language in the report accompanying the Fiscal Year 2027 Homeland Security Appropriations bill:

"The Committee provides $250,000,000 for the procurement of a new Great Lakes Icebreaker that is at least as capable as the USCG MACKINAW."

We thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Remy Fortin in Representative Huizenga's office at remy.fortin@mail.house.gov or Annica Burmester in Representative Dingell's office at annica.burmester@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress

Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

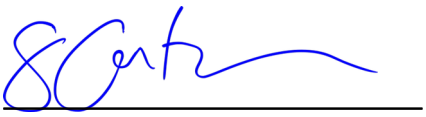
Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress

Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress

Tony Wied
Member of Congress



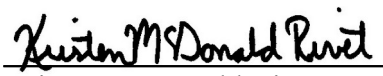
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



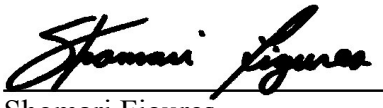
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



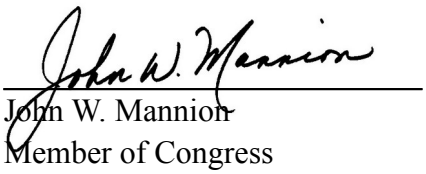
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Tom Barrett
Member of Congress

Lisa C. McClain
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2026

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Fleischmann and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As members of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, we are writing to inform the Subcommittee that we are united in carefully monitoring programs impacting the Great Lakes environment and waterborne commerce. As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 appropriations bill, we write to share our commitment to programs within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that protect our economic and environmental health, including fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes. In particular, we will carefully monitor the following programs:

- **Necessary Asian Carp Control and other aquatic nuisance species activities**, including emergency authority provided through the Water Resources and Reform Development Act of 2014, the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal barrier funding (authorized through Section 3061 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007), the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) (authorized through Section 3061(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007), and GLMRIS-Brandon Road, Will County (authorized through Section 401 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 that was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, and modified by the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023);

- **Navigation Maintenance and Operation activities,** as authorized through the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and as amended, and funding for "additional projects" as authorized through the FY 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations measures;

- **Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration,** as authorized through Section 506 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 and amended by Section 1123 in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016;

- **Great Lakes Tributary Model program,** as authorized through Section 516(e) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996;

- **Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan and Sediment Remediation,** as authorized through Section 401(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990;

- **Construction of a New Lock at the Soo Locks Complex in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan,** as authorized by Section 1149 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 and Section 3091 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, and modified by the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023; and

- **Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study,** as authorized through Section 1219 of the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 and Section 211 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 that was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

The programs carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are critical to the national economy. The Task Force remains committed to making sure that the Great Lakes ports and waterways continue to receive a fair share of federal funding through the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to make sure essential dredging activities are completed in a timely manner so that navigational activities remain vibrant in our region.

As you know, the Great Lakes are a unique natural system of global economic and environmental significance. It provides the world's largest system of fresh surface water, supplying drinking water for more than 30 million Americans; supports over 1.5 million jobs, generating $62 billion in wages annually; and is home to over 3,500 species of plants and animals. At the same time, the Great Lakes have struggled with invasive species, toxic chemical contamination, habitat loss, coastal erosion, and beach closures, so adequate funding for the Corps' mission in the Great Lakes is of the utmost importance.

We thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Remy Fortin in Representative Huizenga's office at remy.fortin@mail.house.gov or Annica Burmester in Representative Dingell's office at annica.burmester@mail.house.gov.

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