



July 23, 2007

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2203

Dear Representative Ehlers:

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Mayors from the United States and Canada commend you and Representative Emanuel for introducing and promptly advancing H. Con Res. 187 for consideration by the full House of Representatives. H. Con Res. 187 represents a commitment to protect a valuable national treasure that accounts for almost 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for over thirty million United States and Canadian citizens, and supports the region's needs for recreation, fishing, transportation and industry.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River face a number of challenges from invasive species to declining lake levels to the continued presence of toxins within the water. After nearly forty years of work to protect the quality of Great Lakes water, we should be taking every measure necessary to reduce pollution to the Lakes, not increase it. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management's approval of an NPDES permit for the British Petroleum (BP) Whiting Refinery, which allows increased pollutant discharge into Lake Michigan of ammonia by 54 percent and of total suspended solids by 35 percent, sets a damaging precedent for Great Lakes water quality and is inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration.

While cities across the Basin support the need to reduce United States dependence on Middle Eastern oil, this cannot be done at the expense of our freshwater. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a coalition of United States and Canadian mayors that work actively to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, will continue to urge BP to install the proper pollution control measures at the BP Whiting Refinery.

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Mayors support H. Con Res. 187 and thank Members of Congress for their continued efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,

Gary Becker
Mayor of Racine
Chairman, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

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