



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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December 10, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries,

From Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to the most recent Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, we are reminded of the invaluable natural resource and the world's largest freshwater system that the Mississippi River Delta and Great Lakes are. In Southeast Michigan, a similar high-intensity weather event could cripple our ability to respond effectively to national or international crises. The strategic importance of this region—home to the Great Lakes, our #1 natural resource and largest supply of fresh water in the world, as well as critical defense infrastructure such as Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the Detroit Arsenal—cannot be overstated. I have worked diligently to ensure that these funds are authorized under the *Water Resources Development Act of 2024*, and I urge you to prioritize funding for a new flood mitigation pump station in Southeast Michigan in the upcoming FEMA supplemental appropriations bill.

Southeast Michigan's infrastructure is key to preserving the Great Lakes basin. The House and Senate's previous support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has demonstrated the power of federal investment in protecting these resources, but continued action is necessary.¹² The combined shoreline of the Great Lakes is greater than that of the Atlantic or Pacific coasts so by funding projects like the Chapaton pump station, we can safeguard our region, set a national example of proactive investment in critical infrastructure, and prevent larger-scale crises that would impose greater costs on taxpayers.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4031/all-actions?s=4&r=4&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22great+lakes+lake+restoration+initiative%22%7D>

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/7776/text?s=4&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22great+lakes+lake+restoration+initiative%22%7D>

Flooding here would not only jeopardize military readiness and access to fresh water for hundreds of millions of Americans but would also disrupt economic and diplomatic activity along our northern border. America's facilities like the Detroit Arsenal and Selfridge Air National Guard Base play vital roles in national defense, disaster response, and international operations; being inundated would delay troop deployments, disrupt logistics, and weaken the U.S. response to crises at home and abroad. The Coast Guard Air Station located at Selfridge, just like USCG Station New Orleans, is responsible for search and rescue missions—operations that would be compromised if the base were to flood. Such vulnerabilities could embolden adversaries and strain U.S.-Canada relations, given the proximity to an international border.

Flooding along Lake St. Clair and the Great Lakes poses a dual risk by starting as a local catastrophe that could likely escalate into a national crisis that would make the Flint water crisis small in comparison. The automotive industry, a cornerstone of America's economy, relies heavily on the uninterrupted operation of this infrastructure. Companies like General Motors, Stellantis and Ford as well as BAE Systems and General Dynamics depend on these systems to maintain supply chains, and a pump failure could result in disruptions costing hundreds of millions of dollars. Such an event would not only burden our national economy but could result in the triggering of emergency disaster relief expenditures and necessitating expensive environmental remediation efforts far exceeding the \$40 million required to modernize this station.

The Great Lakes region, represented by 113 members of Congress—over a quarter of the House—deserves renewed attention and prioritization. Investing in Southeast Michigan's flood mitigation infrastructure is not just about protecting one area: it's about reinforcing the United States' environmental, economic, and national security resilience.

Thank you for your continued leadership in addressing these pressing infrastructure needs. I look forward to working with you to secure funding for this vital investment in our region and the nation.

Sincerely,



John James
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair of House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member of House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair of Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member of Senate Appropriations Committee