



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 23 2012

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Judith L. Meyer, Ph.D.
Acting Chairwoman
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Meyer:

Thank you very much for providing your report on the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan FY 2010-2014*. I know that both the Science Advisory Board and its review panel invested considerable time and effort in reviewing the action plan and other materials and in preparing the SAB's final report. Your recommendations will help guide future decisions under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The federal agencies were especially pleased with the SAB's conclusion that enough is known about the issues confronting the Great Lakes to take action and that the action plan identifies the most important actions that should be undertaken. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's primary purpose has been to accelerate action that will result in direct ecological improvements. As a result, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is beginning to yield a number of successes. For example, the Presque Isle area of concern will be delisted this calendar year. In FY 2011 alone, approximately 260,000 acres in the Great Lakes watershed have been put into conservation practices at priority watersheds to reduce erosion, nutrients and/or pesticide loadings with the help of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Rapid-response capabilities have also been improved under the restoration initiative through state Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans.

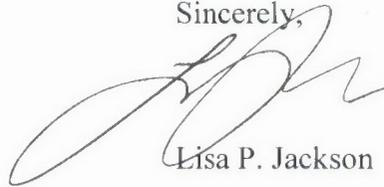
We appreciate the SAB's recognition of the size and complexity of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, including the challenges associated with assessing progress across such a wide-ranging program. As a result, I would like to respond to what we believe are two of your most important recommendations that will help strengthen management under the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan*.

First, we recognize your recommendation that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency create an integrated science-based plan to organize the current activities under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; identify future directions; and develop and implement new restoration technologies, methods and approaches. We are committed to developing such a science plan that will consider the many recommendations from your report. The science plan will help integrate work across all five focus areas and articulate an adaptive management framework for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative activities.

We also acknowledge your recommendation that we establish an independent, standing science panel that could influence the program's evolution. Your suggestion about potential models was especially helpful. We have already begun to explore these and other options for solidifying the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's scientific underpinnings. Of the many potential functions of this science panel, we envision that two of its primary roles will be to review the science plan on a periodic basis and integrate and synthesize restoration progress.

I appreciate your advice and expert recommendations, and I know they will benefit decision-making processes under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. In the meantime, I thank you once more for all your hard work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Jackson', written over the typed name.

Lisa P. Jackson



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 23 2012

THE ADMINISTRATOR

James Sanders, Ph.D.
Chairman
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan Review Panel
Science Advisory Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Dr. Sanders:

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Lisa P. Jackson