



For Immediate Release

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Ohio Citizens Support Restoration and Protection of the Great Lakes

Audubon Ohio presents Speaker Husted and President Harris with over 1600 postcards asking for state action

April 25th, Columbus, OH— Today Audubon Ohio met with the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, Rep. Jon Husted, and President of the Ohio Senate, Sen. Bill Harris, to present over 1600 post cards from citizens from across the state calling for Ohio to take action to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

“These postcards demonstrate the degree of support that citizens from across Ohio have for actions to protect Lake Erie – a key economic driver for this state,” said Audubon Ohio’s Executive Director, Jerry Tinianow.

President Harris and Speaker Husted reinforced their commitment to Great Lakes Protection.

“Our Great Lakes are a vital environmental and economic resource for this region of the nation and thousands of Americans each year enjoy the recreational opportunities the Lakes have to offer,” Husted said. “By working with Audubon Ohio and all those who share our vision for this invaluable resource we can work to ensure that the waters throughout the Great Lakes Basin, and the wildlife and jobs they support, are protected for generations to come. Today is a first step toward accomplishing that shared goal.”

President Harris added, “The Great Lakes are one of Ohio’s greatest treasures and we want to keep it that way. We look forward to joining with the other Great Lakes states to ratify the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact, and to working together to ensure the Lakes are well-maintained and preserved for future generations to enjoy.”

There has been a growing chorus building at the national and regional level for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. The Lakes face many challenges due to invasive species, loss of wetlands, sewage overflows and the threat of water being diverted outside the Basin. In December, the Governors and Premiers from the eight Great Lakes States and two Canadian Provinces signed an agreement to address the diversion threat and increase protection of the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin with the *Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact*. This Compact must be ratified and implemented by all the Great Lakes States and Congress.

Earlier this month, a bipartisan group of U.S. legislators introduced a bill in Congress (the *Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act*) that would implement priority recommendations of the Great Lakes Restoration Plan. The Plan calls for state and federal funding. Among the sponsors of the legislation were Ohio Senators Mike DeWine and George Voinovich.

“We urge Speaker Husted and President Harris to lead the choir here at home to add to the chorus for Great Lakes Protection. Ohio is poised to lead the region by becoming the first Great Lakes state to ratify the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. State funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Plan will also be critical for our economy, our birds and wildlife and for the quality of life of Ohio citizens,” said Tinianow.

Lake Erie is the largest sport fishery in the Great Lakes, which is the largest fresh water sports fishery in the world. Lake Erie also produces over 73,000 jobs and \$4 billion for Ohio and provides over one-third of the state’s travel revenue. The Great Lakes comprise almost 95 percent of the nation’s surface fresh water and supply drinking water to more than 25 million U.S. and Canadian residents. The Great Lakes also support a diversity of birds and other wildlife, maritime trade, industry, and agriculture.

For more information, visit: <http://www.audubonohio.org>

Audubon is dedicated to protecting birds and other wildlife and the habitat that supports them. Our national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations, engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in conservation.

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