

Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers
2010 Water Resources Development Act
Requested Projects

District Requests

- **\$100 million to correct the combined sewer overflows (CSO) in the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.** The City of Grand Rapids has already expended \$210 million of local tax funds in CSO elimination and has achieved impressive reduction in discharges. I am proud of the fact that more than 85 percent of this work has been funded locally. Completing the elimination of CSO discharges as required under the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit will cost another \$100 million, and will greatly benefit the surrounding environment, including Lake Michigan.
- **A feasibility study of the floodwalls along the Grand River in the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently producing updated flood maps for the City, which will be part of the new nationwide Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) for Kent County, Michigan and Incorporated Areas. Currently, the City is working with FEMA to ensure the new DFIRM accurately measures flood flows along the Grand River. In the event that new flood maps necessitate increased flood control measures, the City would like to partner with the Corps to ensure their floodwalls provide adequate flood protection.

Great Lakes Regional Requests

- **Implement emergency measures to prevent the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes.** Recently, testing has found genetic material from Asian carp above the electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal.
- **More dredging in the Great Lakes.** Every year, hundreds of millions of tons of goods are transported through the Great Lakes waterways. However, some of this commerce has been impeded because of the lack of properly dredged channels. Dredging to the needed depths and maintaining other navigational features of the system is critical to regional and national economies. Freighters working in the Great Lakes carry our nation's coal to provide electricity to homes and manufacturing plants, steel for automobiles, and limestone for the construction industry.
- **More capacity at Confined Disposal Facilities (CDF).** Approximately 80 to 90 percent of material dredged from Great Lakes waterways is either discharged into open waters or placed in a CDF. However, most CDFs will be full or at design capacity during this decade, and open-water placement is prohibited by some Great Lakes states. Constructing new CDFs is time-consuming and costly; therefore, extending the life of the existing CDFs makes economic sense. Most of the dredged material that is disposed of in the open waters may be used beneficially, and many communities would like to reuse this dredge material. The request would amend Section 123 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of

1970, which authorizes the construction of CDFs in the Great Lakes, to authorize the Corps to mine and transport suitable materials for recycling at full federal cost, for off-site beneficial use by non-federal partners.

- **A Great Lakes Coastal Infrastructure Study.** Great Lakes water levels have fluctuated for as long as records have been kept. The water levels of Lakes Michigan and Huron, for example, reached record highs in both 1886 and 1986. Lakes Michigan and Huron's record low water levels coincided with events such as the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, the multi-continental severe drought of 1964, and the most recent and strongest El Niño on record of 1997. Currently, tens of millions of people rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water and coastal infrastructure to keep them safe. To prepare for future extreme high and low water levels, authority is needed for a study of risks and reliabilities of existing public infrastructure (water supply and wastewater treatment, transportation, power supply, boating, and recreation) along Great Lakes shoreline under a range of lake level and tributary flow conditions.
- **A Great Lakes Recreational Safety Study.** Recreational boating is growing in popularity throughout the Great Lakes, and millions of recreational boats are registered in the Great Lakes states. The Corps completed a study on the economic impacts of recreation boaters on the Great Lakes and found that there are over 4 million recreational boaters and that they spend \$2.35 billion per year on recreational boating trips. Because weather can change quickly on the Great Lakes and create unsafe conditions, it is important that our harbors are safe and well maintained. The Corps should study the risks associated with recreational boating in federal harbors in Great Lakes related to their lack of maintenance.