

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 14, 2012

Dear President Obama:

As Members of Congress representing coastal Lake Erie, we wish to commend you for your Executive Order of January 19, 2012 announcing new initiatives designed to increase travel and tourism in the United States. We respectfully ask that you direct the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior to specifically consider the unique characteristics of the Great Lakers region as they develop recommendations for a national travel and tourism strategy.

Along with our manufacturing heritage, Great Lakes tourism is a powerful economic driver that supports an estimated 1.6 million jobs and \$152 billion in annual visitor spending. Tourism creates opportunities for our small businesses and encourages a diverse economic base for Lake Erie and other coastal freshwater communities.


Distinct from many destinations in the United States, the Great Lakes region's primary market is domestic and depends largely on a consistent, strategic message to promote our rich cultural heritage, world-class fisheries and unique ecological assets. To advance this effort, we respectfully ask your support for the following:

- Inter-agency consideration of those regions which depend on domestic tourism, including affordable access to U.S. Department of Commerce Market Development programs and the new "Brand USA" initiative.
- Lake Erie regional representation on the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.
- Tourism industry training and community development assistance which can be easily accessed and which recognizes the special characteristics of the Great Lakes region.
- Continued support for Great Lakes Restoration funding as Lake Erie and the Great Lakes region work to address environmental challenges which can negatively impact regional tourism.

Travel and tourism in the Great Lakes region represents tremendous job and coastal economic development opportunities. We look forward to working with you to champion and expand this flourishing industry.

Sincerely,

  
MARCY KAPTUR  
U.S. Representative

  
SHERROD BROWN  
United States Senator