

## **Obama Budget a Down-payment for Great Lakes Campaign Pledge – Next Stop: Congress**

On February 24-26 a group of Northwest Indiana citizens went to Washington D.C. to lobby for laws to protect the Great Lakes and Funds to restore the Lakes. Jeanette Neagu, Co-President of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters; Tom Anderson, Erin Crofton, Deborah Chubb, Teresa Massa and Donna Gonzalez of Save the Dunes Council; Bruce Allen from Save Maumee River; Steve Barker and Chris Kline all had an opportunity to meet with Indiana's Congressional Delegation. President Obama recently announced an unprecedented investment of \$475 Million in his Fiscal Year 2010 Budget to restore the Great Lakes - an effort that is key to creating jobs and growing our economy. Additionally, there could be as much as \$1 billion in other Great Lakes restoration and economic recovery funding provided to the Great Lakes states through increased funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs. Thirty-five million people rely on the Great Lakes for their drinking water, and millions more benefit from the commerce and business that depends on the waters of the Great Lakes.

Lake Michigan League of Women Voters working as part of the 110 member Healing Our Waters® - Great Lakes Coalition applauded the announcement. This investment is a major victory for the Great Lakes, and represents the largest, most serious commitment to Great Lakes restoration in any President's Budget ever. Along with the participation in Great Lakes Day in Washington, D.C. this February by the White House Council of Environmental Quality Director Nancy Sutley and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, the President's Budget demonstrates he is serious about his \$5 billion campaign commitment to the Great Lakes. It is clear he understands that unless America invests in the Great Lakes these problems will get worse and the price we pay will be higher.

Today, the health of our Great Lakes is seriously threatened by problems such as untreated sewage and invasive species. The plan for Great Lakes restoration and economic recovery is a multi-year strategy for tackling the problems, and calls for action to: modernize sewage treatment, clean-up polluted harbors, restore wetlands, and prevent unwanted, new species from invading the lakes. Each of these steps is essential if we are to restore the lakes and revive our economy.

Members of Congress ultimately hold the purse strings for the federal government through the annual appropriations process, so it is critical they match the President's initiative in their own budget resolution and appropriations to restore this treasured resource. Lake Michigan League of Women Voters and the Healing Our Waters – Great Lakes Coalition will be working in the coming weeks to ensure the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation does what's necessary to provide the funding the President has called for to create jobs, revive our economy, and restore the Great Lakes. You can learn more and contact your Members of Congress by visiting [www.healthylakes.org](http://www.healthylakes.org).

The Lake Michigan League of Women Voters represents sixty League chapters that surround Lake Michigan. This organization has been involved with efforts to improve water quality and habitat restoration for over thirty-three years.