

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 2, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Lowey and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger:

As members representing states and districts throughout the Great Lakes basin, we write to request that our tribal, commercial, charter, and recreational fisheries are made eligible for any future assistance Congress provides for fisheries in response to the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act enacted earlier this year provided \$300 million to the Department of Commerce to aid tribal, subsistence, commercial, and charter fishery participants affected by the pandemic. However, the Department of Commerce has interpreted the law in a manner that disqualified our region from qualifying for CARES Act fishery assistance. We are disappointed that both the HEROES Act and the HEALS Act would continue this interpretation of excluding the Great Lakes, despite Great Lakes' fisheries existing partnerships with federal agencies, including the Department of Commerce.

As in the rest of the country, the economic calamity stemming from the pandemic is significantly harming our commercial, charter, recreational, and tribal fisheries. It is estimated that these fisheries and charter businesses have suffered up to \$50 million in losses over the last few months.

We support your efforts to help our nation's fisheries, tribes, and commercial and recreational fishing industries, and ask that you work with us to ensure any future coronavirus assistance is also available to our tribes and businesses in the Great Lakes basin.

Sincerely,

/s/ Debbie Stabenow
DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator

/s/ Rob Portman
ROB PORTMAN
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters
GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
TAMMY DUCKWORTH
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith
TINA SMITH
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Jerry Moran, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable José Serrano, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies