



May 30, 2024

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito:

The American Great Lakes Ports Association represents the public port authorities on the United States side of the Great Lakes. Each of our member port agencies is a division of state or local government, or an independent agency created by state statute. As a group, and individually, Great Lakes ports work to foster maritime commerce in the region and economic development in their communities.

We are writing to share our strong support for Matthew Kaplan, who was nominated by President Biden on May 2nd to serve as the first federal co-chair of the Great Lakes Authority (GLA), a new regional economic development commission created by Congress in 2022. We supported legislation to create the GLA and believe that the Great Lakes region will benefit from enhanced economic development planning and investment.

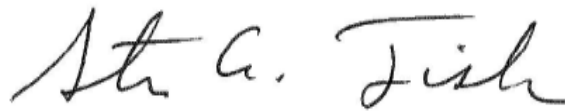
Mr. Kaplan is uniquely qualified to serve in this capacity. As an attorney and former professional staff member in the U.S. House of Representatives, Mr. Kaplan has worked closely with our organization over the last decade on both maritime and environmental policy issues. He has promoted our ports and the Seaway system as a driver of interconnected economic growth. As staff lead for the bicameral Great Lakes Congressional Task Force, he already has a proven track record as a regional champion and has worked to advance the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, construction of the new Soo Lock, and other federal programs critical to the economic health of the Great Lakes states.

The expeditious confirmation of this appointment will allow a number of important "next steps" to take place in order to stand up the new agency. These include the appointment of state co-chairs by the eight Great Lakes Governors, hiring staff and developing a work plan. We are pleased to note that Congress has already provided first year funding of \$5 million in the FY2024 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

While there are numerous and important Great Lakes organizations already working to improve the environment, the Great Lakes Authority presents our region with a new opportunity to leverage our shared strengths for coordinated economic development and job creation. As public port agencies, we share this vision and look forward to working with the GLA to create jobs in our communities.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve A. Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven A. Fisher
Executive Director