

RECOMMENDED NEAR-TERM ACTIONS FROM THE AREAS OF CONCERN (AOC) STRATEGY TEAM- Draft 10/13/05

Introduction

At the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Meeting in Rochester New York on October 6-7, 2005 the GLRC Subcommittee asked each of the Strategy Teams to provide our recommendations for specific near-term actions that the Teams recommend be undertaken in the next 1-2 years. They also requested information about lead and participating entities, estimated costs and milestones. The AOC Strategy Team proposal below is offered to supplement the full set of recommendations included in the GLRC Strategic Plan chapter addressing the areas of concern.

Proposed Near-Term Actions

- 1) Recommendation #1A-Funding Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) Implementation: The Administration should request and Congress should appropriate \$54 million per year in the FY 2007 and FY 2008 budgets to fund implementation of the GLLA in the next two years.

Key Milestones:

- *The Administration includes the requested funding level in its FY 2007 budget request to Congress in February 2006 and for the ensuing year in February 2007.*
- *Congress considers and incorporates the appropriation request in the FY 2007 and FY 2008 budgets by Fall 2006 and Fall 2007, respectively.*
- *During 2006 the GLRC partners identify the AOC cleanup projects to proceed with if additional funding is appropriated.*

- 2) Recommendation # 1B- Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Legacy Act: The Administration should propose and Congress should enact amendments to the GLLA as part of the reauthorization of the Act in 2007. The reauthorization amendments should streamline, accelerate and enhance the AOC cleanup process and should authorize \$150 million per year of funding for GLLA implementation through 2020. Specific areas for improvement are articulated in the AOC chapter of the GLRC Strategic Plan.

Key Milestones:

- *EPA, in close consultation with federal, state, local and tribal partners and key stakeholders, develops a proposed package of statutory amendments to include in the Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Legacy Act during 2006. The proposed amendments should include, but not be limited to, those items described in the AOC chapter of the GLRC Strategic Plan [funding levels, maintenance of effort, life of appropriations, local match requirements, non-federal contractor implementation, etc.]*
- *Congress reauthorizes the GLLA during 2007.*

- 3) Recommendation #2- Enhance AOC Program Capacity: The Administration should request and Congress should appropriate \$10 million/year for states and local coordinating councils plus \$1.7 million /year in FY 2007 and FY 2008 for GLNPO to enhance capacity to implement the AOC cleanups throughout the Great Lakes. Furthermore, the Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan Program, authorized in Section 401 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990, should be included in the President's budget to enable the

Corps of Engineers to participate in the Federal/State AOC Coordinating Committee and to request funding for projects that advance restoration of the AOCs

Key Milestones:

- *The Administration includes the requested funding level in its FY 2007 budget request to Congress in February 2006 and for the ensuing year in February 2007.*
- *Congress considers and incorporates the appropriation request in the FY 2007 and FY 2008 budgets by Fall 2006 and Fall 2007, respectively.*
- *Accelerate establishment of AOC de-listing targets with a goal of completing the targets for each AOC by the end of 2008.*
- *Enhance technical capacity to develop and implement RAPs.*
- *The Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan Program, authorized in Section 401 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990, should be included in the President's budget to enable the Corps of Engineers to participate in the Federal/State AOC Coordinating Committee and to request funding for projects that advance restoration of the AOCs*

- 4) Recommendation #3- Enhance Federal-State Collaboration for AOC Cleanups: The existing U.S. EPA/ State RAP Working Group should be expanded into a Federal/State AOC Coordinating Committee to better coordinate efforts and optimize existing programs and authorities to advance restoration of the AOCs.

Key Milestones:

- *EPA and the States should expand the membership and scope of the existing EPA-State RAP Work Group into a Federal- State AOC Coordinating Committee during 2006. Additional participants should include the Army Corps of Engineers (COE), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and perhaps others.*
- *Develop a charter for the Committee that identifies its charges including but not limited to improving inter-agency coordination, serving as a clearinghouse, providing technical assistance, collecting and sharing data, identifying funding sources and assisting in moving projects forward.*