

United States Senate

February 23, 2022

Admiral Karl L. Schultz
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20593

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Admiral Schultz and Acting Director Young:

As you finalize your budget request to Congress for Fiscal Year 2023, I respectfully urge you to include not less than \$3.4 million in funding for the U.S. Coast Guard's Great Lakes Center of Expertise for Oil Spill Preparedness and Response ("the Center"). This funding will be used to support the Center, which is set to open its doors this summer, as it undertakes the critical work of advancing research, development, and testing of freshwater oil spill response efforts.

An oil spill in the Great Lakes would be devastating to the 40 million Americans who rely upon them for drinking water, recreation, and their livelihoods. Moreover, for more than half of the calendar year the logistics of responding to an oil spill in icy conditions on the Great Lakes would be nearly impossible. This is why I led legislation establishing the Center—which was signed into law in 2018—and to date I have secured \$4.5 million in funding. Last October, I was pleased to announce that the U.S. Coast Guard had selected Lake Superior State University (LSSU) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory to serve as dual locations for the Center.

The Great Lakes are more than just an economic engine and ecological treasure – they are simply in the DNA of Michiganders. An oil spill in the Great Lakes would be catastrophic for Michigan and the country. We need to be doing everything we can to protect them for future generations and to prevent a disaster from happening – including assessing how we can effectively respond to any potential future spill.

As I noted above, the Center will play a vital role in these efforts. LSSU, which will serve as the Center's formal hub and home to its supervising Lt. Commander, has an ideal location that is in close proximity to crude oil transportation infrastructure, submerged pipelines, and navigational locks. NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory is a state of the art center designed for scientific research and interagency collaboration that alongside LSSU will maximize the Center's research and operational capabilities.

By providing \$3.4 million in funding for FY23, we will be able to ensure that the Center is able to begin delivering on its core goals, which include:

- **Identifying gaps in Great Lakes oil spill research**, including providing assessments of major scientific or technological deficiencies in responses to past spills in the Great Lakes and other freshwater bodies — and seeking to fill those gaps — as well as monitoring and assessing the current state of knowledge regarding freshwater oil spill response technologies;
- **Conducting research, development, testing, and evaluation for freshwater oil spill response equipment**, technologies, and techniques to mitigate and respond to oil spills in the Great Lakes;
- **Helping train first responders** on the federal, state and local level on the incident command structure system and response technologies and strategies; and
- **Working with academic and the private sector** to develop and standardize maritime oil spill response training.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to continue working with you to ensure that the Center has the resources it needs to help keep the Great Lakes safe from disaster.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary C. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being the most prominent.

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator