Dear Member of Congress:

As religious leaders across a broad spectrum of traditions, we understand water as a symbol of preservation, cleansing, and renewal. Water is a gift from God and waterways such as the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay are prime examples of how important water is to our health and wellbeing. We also understand the moral imperative to ensure clean water for future generations.

We urge you to provide appropriate and robust funding to help restore the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay so that all of God’s Creation can be fully protected.

The Chesapeake Bay is the U.S.’s largest estuary and used to be one of the most productive bodies of water in the world. Eighteen million people live in the 64,000-square-mile watershed who depend on clean water for drinking, food, recreation, and tourism. The Bay itself also sustains a large commercial fishing and crabbing industry.

The Great Lakes is part of the largest freshwater ecosystem in the world and home to thousands of plant and animal species. The Great Lakes contain 95 percent of our country’s surface fresh water supply and are a primary economic driver in the region.

However, both the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay have declined in water quality and overall health because of human activity over the years. While efforts have been underway to restore both the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay, there still is much left to be done to help protect these vital waterways. The work of repairing these important regional water bodies, done with the help and funding of the Environmental Protection Agency, involves restoring habitat and wetlands, cleaning up toxic pollution, combating invasive species, and helping control runoff from farms and urban areas.

As people of faith, we recognize that stewardship of water is part of our call to care for God’s fragile web of life. To truly love our brothers and sisters, we must restore the waterbodies that we all share.

Healthy rivers, bays, lakes and streams are vital for safe drinking water, strong economies, tourism, and healthy communities. We have the moral obligation today to ensure clean water for current and future generations.

Sincerely,