(Month) (Day (Year)

The Honorable (Your Representative’s Name) Address

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ,

As a concerned citizen of \_Insert State , I am writing to you on behalf of lakes both around the country and also in our own great state of \_insert state . We request that Congress restore funding to, and enhance, Section 314 (Clean Lakes Program) of the Clean Water Act to properly protect and restore the beautiful and beneficial lakes of our nation. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, later known as the Clean Water Act, was originally established in 1972. This program historically provided grants to help study and diagnose sources of pollutants and restore water quality of the nation’s lakes. The Clean Lakes Program provided over $145 million in grants to states across the country from 1976 through the mid-1990s, leading to the establishment of statewide lake water quality assessment programs as well as major lake, watershed, and water quality restoration projects. Section 314 projects slowed degradation and stabilized lakes from the brink of irreversible damage.

Despite its early success, the Clean Lakes Program has not been funded since 1995, and lakes have continued to degrade since that time. According to the 2017 National Lakes Assessment (NLA) report, nutrient pollution is widespread; 45% of the nation’s lakes have elevated phosphorus and 46% have elevated nitrogen concentrations. Such conditions contribute to harmful algal and cyanobacteria blooms. The NLA 2017 study found that 24% of the nation’s lakes are in poor condition and could not support healthy ecosystems and recreation. Additionally, algal toxins were found in 21% of lakes, threatening public health, swimming, fishing, and/or drinking.

In 1987 Congress amended the Clean Water Act and established the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program. EPA currently uses Section 319 to mitigate nonpoint sources of pollution like stormwater, excess fertilizer or runoff from agricultural facilities. The existing 319 grant program directs states to appropriate a portion of the funding towards lake restoration and protection. However, just a small percent of the total 319 funding goes toward lake, reservoir, or pond projects. Lakes still need the funds that were granted by the Section 314 Clean Lakes Program to address the issues that lakes are facing today. The Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program is currently not sufficient.

I urge you to support refunding and enhancing the Section 314 Clean Lakes Program. An enhanced Clean Lakes Program will support best management practices for the protection and preservation of the nation’s remaining high quality lakes, and it will help rehabilitate degraded lakes. An enhanced program is needed to reverse the trend of lake degradation due to nutrient enrichment, harmful algae blooms, shoreline habitat loss, and other stressors, which are being magnified due to climate change. Protection requires funds directed towards activities that will prevent pollution and safeguard the health of high quality lakes for future generations. Please support the funding for an enhanced Clean Lakes Program.

Sincerely,

(your name)

(your title)