

# THE OHIO RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM ACT

## *Ohio River Basin Caucus Co-Chairs Representatives Morgan McGarvey and Erin Houchin are working to support the Ohio River Basin.*

The geographic footprint of the Ohio River covers 55 congressional districts across 14 states—more than 25 million people in the region depend on the waters of the Ohio River Basin for their drinking water, health, jobs, and more. In 2023, the Ohio River was named the 2nd most endangered river in the country, and it is the largest body of water in the United States that does not receive any dedicated federal funding for clean-up.

The Ohio River Restoration Program Act, modeled after successful initiatives like those in the Great Lakes, the Chesapeake and other major bodies of water, would create an Ohio River National Program Office within the Environmental Protection Agency to convene states, local governments, interstate compact agencies, tribal nations, and non-governmental organizations to work in conjunction to secure federal funding opportunities and create an action plan designed to carry out initiatives related to:

- Core restoration actions that can provide a solid foundation for an Ohio River restoration and protection plan, such as habitat restoration, farm conservation, and invasive species control and management.
- Pollution prevention and clean water protection that can complement and support restoration actions.
- Robust monitoring, data collection, and evaluation that can be used to effectively and efficiently manage a restoration and protection program across 14 states.
- Homeowner support that can help ensure that no person is denied clean, safe, and affordable water based on their economic status or where they live.
- Workforce development and job training that can help create strong, local economies based on water protection and restoration.
- Strong local public engagement structures to ensure that residents have a seat at the table to weigh in on restoration decisions and hold elected officials accountable.
- Investments and policies that help communities prepare for the impacts of extreme storms and flooding.
- Investments and policies that help the communities most impacted by pollution.

### **ENDORSED BY:**

National Wildlife Federation, Ohio River Basin Alliance, Ohio River Way, American Rivers, Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Appalachian Voices, Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, West Virginia Rivers Coalition Inc., Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Kentucky Resources Council, Inc, River Fields, River City Paddle Sports, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Upstream Pittsburgh, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, Virginia Conservation Network, Three Rivers Waterkeeper, PennFuture, Groundwork Ohio River Valley, Ohio Conservation Federation, Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN), Kentucky Riverkeeper, Friends of Bell Smith Springs, Prairie Rivers Network, Ohio River Foundation and Kentucky Conservation Committee