

Michael H. Shapiro
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water
Ariel Rios Building Mail Code 410M
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

July 5, 2012

RE – New Location for the Urban Waters Federal Partnership

Dear Mike,

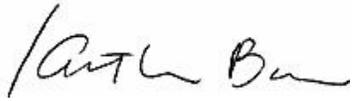
As part of our work to restore rivers and the communities that depend on them in the Great Lakes Region, American Rivers has seen firsthand the positive impacts of green infrastructure and river redevelopment in Toledo and Milwaukee. Similarly, our dam removal work throughout the country, where we restore rivers to a natural condition, has produced clean water and economic benefits for communities. That's why we're excited to see Grand Rapids pursuing the restoration of the Grand River as a way to revitalize the city while improving the environment, and believe it would be an excellent new location for the multi-agency Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

The Grand River Restoration project is led by a diverse local group following the community-based Green Grand Rapids planning process that emphasized restoring the Grand River as the heart of the community. At the centerpiece of this project is removing a series of dams to restore the river's original rapids and we support such dam removal to recreate natural conditions as a way to increase habitat, improve water quality and enhance recreation and economic opportunities.

Adding Grand Rapids as a new location would also dovetail well with existing EPA investment. American Rivers, supported by EPA Region Five, is already working with the city and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to pilot a "Green Infrastructure Portfolio Standard," a stormwater management tool designed to accelerate the use of green infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure Portfolio Standard applies the concept of a renewable energy portfolio standard to water management to increase and measure green infrastructure approaches throughout a city.

As Michigan's longest river, the Grand River is an important part of the Lake Michigan ecosystem as well as the cultural and economic heritage of the Grand Rapids area. American Rivers strongly supports including Grand Rapids and the Grand River Project as a new location for the Urban Waters Federal Partnership as an opportunity to breathe even more life into an urban ecosystem.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Baer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katherine Baer
Senior Director, Clean Water and Water Supply Programs

Cc: Lisa Pelstring, U.S. Department of the Interior
Michael Rains, U.S. Forest Service
Surabhi Shah, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency