Lake Michigan is part of our city's identity and is one of our greatest resources. Protecting it is critical for our environment and the jobs – from fishing to shipping to tourism to manufacturing – that rely on a healthy Lake Michigan.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed two amendments I wrote to help protect Lake Michigan. One amendment, which passed as part of the bipartisan-Clean Estuaries Act, would help indentify invasive species sooner to possibly prevent invasive species from getting to the Great Lakes. The amendment allows for long-term monitoring of invasive species' presence and spread in certain estuaries, including introduction into such waterways through ballast water. Invasive species like Zebra Mussels or Asian Carp may first be found in these estuaries.

The other amendment, which was to the America COMPETES Act, added the Great Lakes to a research program that without this effort, would have only studied the effect of climate change on our oceans. It's common sense — a study looking at the oceans should look at the Great Lakes, our world's largest freshwater resource, too.