



8 August 2025

Michigan Sea Grant
Graduate Student Research Fellowship Review Committee
400 North Ingalls, Suite G241
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Dear Review Committee,

It is my pleasure to provide this letter of recommendation for Connor O'Loughlin, a graduate student in my group who is applying for the 2025 Michigan Sea Grant Graduate Student Research Fellowship. Connor joined my lab in the summer of 2024 to begin his M.S. work on our MISG-funded project, "An Ecosystem-Scale Approach to Understanding Changing Winters in the Great Lakes". Beginning in the Fall of 2025, Connor will transition to the Ph.D. program, where he will continue his work on our MISG project.

Our project requires the coordination of multiple collaborating research teams, including the organization and supply of sampling material kits. Connor has successfully carried out that significant task, while also moving forward in his research. This demonstrates his ability to plan and coordinate complex research tasks, which will serve him well if awarded the GSRF. In addition, Connor took on methods development tasks that both serve his research goals and those of the lab, deriving a method for the BONCAT analyses which are included in his proposed GSRF work, and contributing to the lab development of organic matter analysis pipelines, which are also included in the GSRF work. Connor's progress over the past year demonstrates his ability to problem solve and ask questions that will move his work forward as he transitions into the Ph.D. program.

Connor's proposed work integrates well with our funded MISG project but adds a new and exciting dimension to it, which will inform our understanding of the responses of bacterial communities to biogeochemical change in the Great Lakes. He will be well-supported in our lab, and our location within the Michigan Tech Great Lakes Research Center means that he will have access to field logistics and equipment support to ensure the successful completion of his research.

In closing, I am pleased to support Connor's efforts as he embarks on his doctoral studies, and I am excited to see his ideas and work move forward. Since joining the lab, Connor has demonstrated, curiosity and a desire to learn. Combined with his strong background in the environmental sciences, I believe that he is well-positioned to embark on a path to a successful research career, with support from the GSRF. I recommend him without hesitation. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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