

Clean Water Act Section 319 Program - Nonpoint source pollution

Background on the Issue

Water pollution from nonpoint sources is a substantial contributor to the impairment of waters across the Great Lakes basin. Nonpoint source pollution is present throughout the basin, in many forms and with many interactions. The complexity of the pollutants and their presence in soil, water and air make pollution abatement for nonpoint sources particularly difficult to address.

Nonpoint source impacts vary greatly in frequency and severity across the Great Lakes. Impacts have been particularly severe in the coastal wetlands and tributaries that once buffered the Lakes from environmental damage. Other prime impact areas include western Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, Green Bay, the coastal region of Ohio, selected Areas of Concern (AOCs), and selected tributaries or near-shore areas.

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award states, territories, and tribes grant money to support a wide variety of activities under EPA-approved nonpoint source management programs. EPA's funding priority is to award grants that promote the development and implementation of watershed-based plans, focusing on watersheds with water quality impairments caused by nonpoint sources, which result in improved water quality in impaired waters. These watershed plans are a mechanism to coordinate monitoring and planning on a watershed basis and will build a foundation for effective implementation actions using federal and other funding. Nonpoint source implementation projects include best management practice (BMP) installation for animal wastes, sediment, pesticide and fertilizer control, a variety of other structural and non-structural practices, watershed planning, monitoring, watershed coordinators, technology demonstration, and a variety of education/outreach programs, among others.

Priorities

Appropriate \$82.0M to the EPA for grants to Great Lakes states to address nonpoint source pollution controls.

Funding History and Committee Jurisdiction

Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant Funds History

Federal Fiscal Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Grant Total (in millions)	\$238.5	\$237	207.3	204.3	199.3

Source: EPA <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/319hhistory.html>

House:

Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Senate:

Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Water
Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Benefits to the Great Lakes Region

Grants awarded under section 319, State, Territories, and Indian Tribes receive grant money which support a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects, and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects. These programs significantly reduce the amount of runoff of phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment and other pollutants entering Great Lakes water bodies. These efforts help to restore impaired waters on a watershed basis within the region.

Links for more information

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/cwact.html>