



RESOLUTION  
Adopted February 24, 2016

**Great Lakes restoration and economic revitalization:  
Great Lakes Commission federal priorities for 2016**

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are a binational treasure and an environmental and economic asset of vital importance to the eight Great Lakes states, two provinces and the North American economy; and

**Whereas**, more than 48 million Americans and Canadians depend on and use the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River for drinking water, recreation, manufacturing of products, power generation, commercial fishing and navigation, among other benefits; and

**Whereas**, benefits from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin continue to be threatened by the release of untreated sewage, invasive species, toxic contaminants, nutrient pollution, deteriorating water infrastructure, inadequately maintained ports and harbors, degraded and under-utilized waterfront areas, and other causes; and

**Whereas**, Congress and the Administration are supporting an unprecedented partnership with the Great Lakes states and other partners to implement the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which is strategically targeting the most critical problems facing the Great Lakes; and

**Whereas**, the GLRI is generating real results, with more than 2,900 restoration projects implemented, six Areas of Concern cleaned up, farmland enrolled in conservation programs increased by 70 percent in priority watersheds; 150,000 acres of habitat restored or protected; 500 barriers removed or bypassed to open more than 3,400 miles of rivers and streams for fish; and monitoring and response actions implemented and new control technologies developed to prevent the introduction of Asian carp; and

**Whereas**, the 2014 Farm Bill and Water Resources Reform and Development Act provide important new programs and authorities that, if fully funded and effectively implemented, can protect the Great Lakes and strengthen the economic vitality of our region's maritime transportation system.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission endorses a suite of federal priorities for 2016, with a focus on:

- Providing at least \$300 million for the GLRI in FY 2017 with a focus on cleaning up heavily degraded Areas of Concern, controlling invasive species including Asian carp, preventing polluted runoff that causes toxic algae, and restoring habitat for valuable fish and wildlife resources;
- Passing comprehensive legislation that formally authorizes the GLRI and other critical, existing Great Lakes programs;
- Preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS), including Asian carp, by sustaining successful monitoring and control efforts under the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework in coordination with Illinois and other states; completing the Brandon Road Feasibility Study as quickly as practicable; continuing investigations of a long-term solution to prevent AIS transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds while maintaining or enhancing beneficial uses of the waterway system for flood control, water quality, recreation and barge transportation; strengthening federal programs to prevent the importation of new invasive species; and supporting the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's sea lamprey control program and other federal and state programs to prevent and control invasive species;

- Safeguarding drinking water by funding the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs to help local communities repair failing water infrastructure and protect drinking water systems, and implementing the new strategic plan for protecting drinking water from harmful algal blooms; and
- Ensuring Farm Bill conservation programs target watersheds that contribute polluted runoff to the Great Lakes, with a focus on effective implementation of state and provincial initiatives, including the Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement on phosphorus reduction and projects implemented under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program; and
- Strengthening the Great Lakes navigation system by managing the Great Lakes as a single, integrated navigation system as directed by the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act; advancing a new large lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich; increasing appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, including dedicated funding for Great Lakes ports and recreational harbors; and promoting beneficial alternatives to the disposal of dredged material in the Great Lakes; and

**Be It Further Resolved,** that federal agencies are called upon to share information and cooperate in implementing a Blue Accounting information management strategy to improve regional decisionmaking, enable adaptive management, and help Great Lakes leaders guide investments and measure progress toward our common goals for the Great Lakes; and

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the GLRI is intended to supplement, not supplant, base funding for Great Lakes programs and the Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to maintain funding for core programs; and

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to continue to strengthen collaboration with the eight Great Lakes states in the implementation of the GLRI, recognizing that elevating their role will improve administrative efficiency and ensure that resources are directed at the most important on-the-ground restoration priorities in shoreline communities; and

**Be It Finally Resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Obama Administration and Congress to sustain the progress being made in restoring the Great Lakes and leveraging them as an economic asset for the eight-state Great Lakes region by supporting these priorities, maintaining core programs that provide for ongoing conservation and management of the Great Lakes, and establishing the legal and statutory foundation needed to ensure current efforts are sustained into the next presidential administration.