



Adopted March 5, 2014

Advancing economic strength and environmental integrity for the Great Lakes region: Federal priorities for 2014

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, 36 million Americans and Canadians depend on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin for drinking water, recreation, fish and wildlife resources, power generation and commercial navigation, among other benefits; and

Whereas, these benefits from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin continue to be threatened by the release of untreated sewage, invasive species, toxic contaminants, deteriorating water infrastructure, inadequately maintained ports and harbors, 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;

Whereas, the Great Lakes region – including states, cities, tribes, business and industry, and nongovernmental groups – are investing significant time and resources to implement the GLRI and translate regional goals into site-specific actions that generate real benefits for local communities; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes states are critical partners in the success of the GLRI with the best knowledge and experience to ensure that resources are targeted at local priorities, and several of the Great Lakes states have adopted Great Lakes restoration strategies and plans to complement federal restoration activities in their states; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes region faces other challenges and opportunities, including preventing the introduction and spread of Asian carp and other invasive species, repairing failing water infrastructure, preventing nutrient pollution, and strengthening the Great Lakes commercial navigation system.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission endorses a suite of federal priorities for 2014, with a primary focus on:

- Providing funding and direction to the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies to advance alternatives from the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study and supporting immediate implementation of control measures that can move forward now; supporting a comprehensive national Asian carp control program led by USF&WS and the successful sea lamprey control program led by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; and taking action to strengthen federal programs to prevent the importation of invasive species
- Providing \$300 million-\$475 million for the GLRI in FY 2015 and updating the GLRI Action Plan to guide the restoration program over the next five years, with strengthened performance measures and reporting to better track progress, and actions to account for challenges outside the scope of the GLRI, such as climate change and failing wastewater infrastructure

- Passing comprehensive legislation that authorizes important existing Great Lakes programs and provides a strong regional framework to sustain effective restoration, protection and ongoing management of the Great Lakes
- Providing funding for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs in FY 2015 to repair failing water infrastructure, including separating combined sewers and upgrading sewage treatment plants to prevent the release of nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes; including provisions for low-interest loans and grants to assist economically struggling communities
- Providing funding for and expediting implementation of new Farm Bill programs that implement soil conservation and water quality protection measures, including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program that focuses on reducing nutrient pollution in priority watersheds, with input from the Great Lakes states and in coordination with state priorities
- Passing water resources development legislation that supports maritime infrastructure in the Great Lakes, including directing at least 15 percent of annual appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to the Great Lakes and authorizing the Great Lakes Navigation System as a single, integrated navigation system for purposes of budgetary planning and allocation of federal funding
- Increasing appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund with a primary focus on critical needs facing authorized navigation projects; the Corps of Engineers should implement a new funding approach that manages the Great Lakes as a single, integrated navigation system, with close consultation with the Great Lakes states and regional stakeholders; 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 together with core programs that provide for ongoing conservation and management of the Great Lakes.