



Adopted March 6, 2013

Advancing Phase II of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Passing Comprehensive Great Lakes Legislation

Whereas, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was initiated in 2009 as a five-year, \$2.2 billion program to implement a comprehensive restoration plan that addresses priorities established by the governors of the eight Great Lakes states and targets the most critical problems facing the Great Lakes, including

- Toxic substances and Areas of Concern
- Invasive species
- Nearshore health and nonpoint source pollution
- Habitat and wildlife protection and restoration
- Accountability, education, monitoring, evaluation, communication and partnerships; and

Whereas, the GLRI has established key components for an effective restoration program, including a detailed Action Plan with clear performance goals, an accountability system, and a funding plan that strategically aligns existing programs with those goals; and

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

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission has presented recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the GLRI based on states' experiences and an independent Science Advisory Board Review Panel has evaluated the GLRI Action Plan and provided advice to guide future decisions; and

Whereas, funding provided by Congress to date for the GLRI has been below the amount originally projected to ensure its completion (\$2.2 billion); and

Whereas, ecosystem outcomes from the restoration program likely will not become fully apparent for some years after its implementation; and

Whereas, these and other factors underscore the complexity of implementing a large-scale ecosystem restoration program that utilizes sound science and draws on the full array of programs, authorities and implementation capabilities among federal and state agencies, local jurisdictions and regional organizations; and

Whereas, congressional action is needed to formally authorize the GLRI and reauthorize several vital existing Great Lakes programs and strengthen coordination with regional stakeholders and binational cooperation with Canada; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act (GLEPA), comprehensive, bipartisan Great Lakes legislation first introduced in 2012 by the co-chairs of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, is expected to be reintroduced in the 113th Congress and will formally authorize the GLRI and the Federal Interagency Task Force, reauthorize the Great Lakes Legacy Act, establish a Great Lakes Advisory Board, and call for implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Therefore, be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on U.S. EPA, along with other federal agencies, to lead development of an extended timeframe for a second phase of the GLRI that incorporates a careful assessment of the program, the development of specific environmental outcomes and metrics to measure progress toward those outcomes, and modifications to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, including consideration of recommendations from the Great Lakes Commission, the U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board, the International Joint Commission, and other partners, and that this be done in close consultation with the Great Lakes states, the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, and other regional partners; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress, with leadership from the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, to pass comprehensive Great Lakes protection legislation to improve the efficiency of the GLRI, strengthen Great Lakes programs, and facilitate effective long-term management and conservation of the lakes; and

Be it Finally Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on U.S. EPA to use existing advisory bodies, wherever possible, and avoid unnecessary committees, boards and related structures.