



Lake Huron

Strengthening the Great Lakes as an Environmental and Economic Asset

Regional Priorities for Restoration and Protection

MARCH 2013



Lake Superior



Lake Erie

The Great Lakes states and coastal communities across the region are leveraging the competitive advantage the lakes provide as both a natural treasure and a vital economic asset. In particular, our region is implementing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a bipartisan, multi-year program that is addressing the most serious problems facing the Great Lakes. This action-oriented initiative is generating meaningful, site-specific improvements. Fully implementing our regional restoration strategy is projected to generate at least \$50 billion in long-term economic benefits for our region. We must keep taking action and get the job done.

Our organizations urge Congress to support these top regional priorities for the Great Lakes.

Maintain funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The GLRI is cleaning up Areas of Concern, halting Asian carp and other invasive species, and preventing polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms. Nearly 1,200 projects are completed or underway, but much work remains. **Maintain support for the GLRI to sustain our progress and build on investments from the states and local communities by providing at least \$300 million in FY 2014.**

Enact comprehensive legislation to support Great Lakes conservation efforts

Legislation entitled the Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act was introduced last year to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, reauthorize the Great Lakes Legacy Act, and strengthen regional coordination, accountability and binational cooperation with Canada. **Cosponsor and support similar legislation if introduced this year.**

Sustain the economic and ecological vitality of Great Lakes ports and harbors

Historically low water levels create challenging economic and ecological conditions for commercial and recreational ports and harbors. Cargo vessels cannot operate at full capacity and some recreational harbors may close. Meanwhile, we are not fully using resources available from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which has a surplus of over \$6 billion. **Help Great Lakes coastal communities by providing funding to maintain access to existing commercial ports and recreational harbors, using ecologically protective measures.**

Invest in clean water infrastructure

Continued support is needed to help local communities repair and upgrade aging infrastructure to end sewer overflows, keep Great Lakes beaches open and safeguard drinking water. **Reauthorize and provide funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds.**

Halt Asian carp, sea lamprey, and other aquatic invasive species

Invasive species seriously threaten the future of the Great Lakes ecosystem and economy. **Provide funding for programs that prevent and control Asian carp, sea lamprey and other harmful species and pass legislation to prevent the importation of harmful species.**

Incorporate strong Great Lakes conservation provisions and funding in the Farm Bill

Farm Bill conservation programs protect the Great Lakes from soil erosion and polluted runoff from agricultural operations. **Reauthorize the Farm Bill and support the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to target areas that contribute to water quality problems in the Great Lakes.**



Great Lakes Commission



Healing Our Waters®-
Great Lakes Coalition



Great Lakes
Fishery Commission



Great Lakes and
St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Chippewa Ottawa
Resource Authority



Council of
Great Lakes Industries



Great Lakes Metro
Chambers Coalition

**The Great Lakes region is united
in asking Congress to support these priorities.**

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