



RESOLUTION  
Adopted Feb. 25, 2015

**Sustaining Great Lakes Restoration  
and Economic Revitalization:  
Great Lakes Commission federal priorities for 2015**

**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, and commercial fishing and 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**, the emergency closure of the Toledo, Ohio, drinking water system in August 2014 due to contamination by toxic algae in Lake Erie illustrates the continued threats to the environmental and economic health of the lakes; 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 2,000 restoration projects implemented, six Areas of Concern cleaned up, and farmland acreage enrolled in conservation programs doubled to prevent polluted runoff in critical watersheds; 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 2015, with a focus on:

- providing at least \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in FY 2016 to sustain progress in restoring and revitalizing the Great Lakes;
- passing comprehensive legislation that formally authorizes the GLRI and other critical, existing Great Lakes programs;
- preventing the introduction of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) through development of alternatives from the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study, with an immediate focus on near-term control measures at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam; reauthorizing the National Invasive Species Act; supporting the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's sea lamprey control program; and strengthening federal programs to prevent the importation of 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 from toxic algae; federal agencies should collaborate with state and local officials to strengthen standards and practices to detect and treat toxic algae;
- ensuring Farm Bill conservation programs target watersheds that contribute polluted runoff to the Great Lakes, with a focus on effective implementation of the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program; and
- strengthening the Great Lakes navigation system by increasing appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, including dedicated funding for Great Lakes ports and recreational harbors, and managing the Great Lakes as a single, integrated navigation system as directed by the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act; and promoting beneficial alternatives to the disposal of dredged material in the Great Lakes.

**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.