



Adopted Sept. 30, 2014

Support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan II in fiscal years 2015-19

Whereas, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are national treasures, and environmental and economic assets of vital importance; and

Whereas, benefits to the 36 million Canadians and Americans who depend on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River continue to be threatened by the release of untreated sewage, invasive species, toxic contaminants, nutrient runoff contributing to harmful algal blooms, deteriorating water infrastructure, inadequately maintained ports and harbors, and declining water levels due to climate change and other causes; and

Whereas, with leadership from the president and the region's governors, and bipartisan support from Congress, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has supported a targeted, regional effort to address critical problems facing the Great Lakes since its inception in 2010; and

Whereas, the GLRI is making significant progress, with more than 2,000 restoration projects implemented to clean up degraded coastal areas, prevent invasive species, and prevent polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms, with notable results including increased state capacity to support Great Lakes restoration efforts, removal of 42 beneficial use impairments and completion of cleanup work in five Areas of Concern; and

Whereas, funding provided by Congress to date for the GLRI has been below the amount projected to ensure its completion within the original five-year timeframe (\$2.2 billion) and ecosystem outcomes from the restoration program likely will not become fully apparent for some years after its implementation; 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 restoration goals into site-specific actions that benefit local communities; and

Whereas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), along with other federal agencies, has updated the GLRI Action Plan to strengthen and guide the program through an extended implementation period from FY 2015-19, incorporating a science-based adaptive management framework and strengthened measures of progress to track implementation actions; and

Whereas, in July 2013 the Great Lakes Commission presented U.S. EPA and its partner agencies with recommendations on updating the GLRI Action Plan and strengthening program implementation through FY 2019 with a request for improved coordination and communication with the states; and

Whereas, the Government Accountability Office, the Great Lakes Advisory Board and U.S. EPA's Science Advisory Board have provided recommendations for the GLRI that are addressed in the new Action Plan.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission commends U.S. EPA and its federal partners for updating the GLRI Action Plan for fiscal years 2015-19 and urges its effective implementation with a continued focus on the key goals to clean up Areas of Concern, prevent and control invasive species, reduce nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful algal blooms, and restore habitat for native species; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on federal agencies to carry out the updated Action Plan in close consultation with the Great Lakes states, the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation and other regional partners; and

Be It Finally Resolved that the Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress to continue funding for the GLRI through Fiscal Year 2019.