

The Great Lakes

AN ECONOMIC ENGINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL TREASURE

A Joint Agenda for the Great Lakes Region • March 2017



The Great Lakes are a vital economic and environmental asset for countless cities, eight states, two countries and tribal nations. The lakes contain 95 percent of our nation's fresh surface water and fuel a \$5 trillion regional economy that generates 30 percent of U.S. and Canadian economic activity and is the third largest economy in the world. Our investments in the Great Lakes are producing results that are revitalizing waterfront communities, bolstering commercial navigation, protecting public health and strengthening the regional economy. Much work remains, however, including rebuilding aging water infrastructure, cleaning up contaminated sites, preventing an invasion of Asian carp and other invasive species, maintaining ports and harbors, and preventing polluted runoff that causes harmful algal blooms.

Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is an enduring, bipartisan priority for the people of the Great Lakes region and their elected leaders. Our organizations present these priorities to sustain progress and maintain the Great Lakes as an economic engine and environmental treasure.

Invest in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure

Aging drinking water infrastructure threatens our region's future prosperity and the health of our citizens. The crises in Flint, Michigan, and Toledo, Ohio, illustrate the urgent need to safeguard drinking water sources and modernize drinking water systems. Aging and inadequate sewer systems release sewage and stormwater into the Great Lakes each year, closing beaches and threatening public health. *Boost funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program (WIFIA).*

Support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The GLRI is producing results and creating jobs by cleaning up contaminated sites, addressing threats from Asian carp and other invasive species, preventing polluted runoff that causes toxic algae, restoring habitat for valuable fish and wildlife and paving the way for economic development. The program enjoys strong, bipartisan support and was formally authorized by Congress in 2016 for five years at \$300 million annually. Much work remains and Congress and the President should sustain this successful program. *Appropriate at least \$300 million for the GLRI in FY 2018 to advance restoration of our Great Lakes.*

Protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp, sea lamprey and other aquatic invasive species

Strong federal leadership is needed to prevent the introduction or spread of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species that threaten the health of the lakes and the economic benefits they provide to local communities. *Prevent the introduction of Asian carp by sustaining efforts under the Asian Carp Action Plan; the Army Corps of Engineers should complete a draft plan for preventing Asian carp from moving through the Brandon Road Lock and Dam so it can be reviewed by the Great Lakes states and other interested parties; support strong federal ballast water regulations that sufficiently protect the unique ecological and economic interests of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence states; and support the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's sea lamprey control program and other regional and state programs to prevent and control invasive species.*

Strengthen the Great Lakes navigation system

The Department of Homeland Security estimates that a six-month failure of the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, would lead to a national recession and 11 million lost jobs. The Great Lakes navigation system is vital for our region and the economies of the U.S. and Canada. Infrastructure for commercial navigation and recreational boating must be maintained and upgraded. In particular, a new lock at the Soo is needed to ensure reliable access to raw materials that are vital for manufacturing nationwide. *Maintain and improve commercial ports, navigation infrastructure and recreational harbors using ecologically protective measures and advance construction of a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to safeguard manufacturing and our national security.*

Provide leadership to coordinate effective federal actions for the Great Lakes

The President and Congress should support interagency coordination that ensures federal programs for the Great Lakes are deployed effectively and coordinated with state, local and tribal efforts. *Reappoint a senior advisor to coordinate federal Great Lakes programs and maintain the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, Great Lakes Advisory Board and Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. Continue a strategic approach to Great Lakes restoration and protection through interagency implementation plans such as the GLRI Action Plan.*



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

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