

**Great Lakes Commission Proposed Resolution:  
Support for Effective Administration of State Revolving Funds  
DRAFT: February 26, 2024**

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes sustain a \$6 trillion economy, contain more than 90% of North America's supply of surface freshwater, and provide drinking water for more than 40 million people in the United States and Canada; and

**Whereas**, the U.S. EPA estimates that fixing, updating, and modernizing the region's crumbling water infrastructure will cost up to \$188 billion over the next 20 years, and that backlog grows every year that we fail to invest in our nation's water infrastructure; and

**Whereas**, in 1987, the U.S. Congress amended the Clean Water Act to establish the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), which provides low-interest financing for wastewater infrastructure projects that ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act and maintain public health; and

**Whereas**, between 1987 and 2022, Congress appropriated nearly \$50 billion to the CWSRF, which was allocated throughout the states and territories through an established formula, and has been leveraged to provide \$163 billion to communities for water projects; and

**Whereas**, in 1996, Congress enacted the Safe Drinking Water Act, which authorized the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to provide low-interest financing for water infrastructure projects that ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act to maintain public health; and

**Whereas**, since 1996, Congress has appropriated approximately \$24.5 billion to the DWSRF, which is allocated throughout the states and territories through an established formula, and has been leveraged to provide approximately \$53 billion toward water infrastructure investments; and

**Whereas**, in 2021, Congress acknowledged the significant need to upgrade water infrastructure throughout the U.S. by enacting the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which included more than \$43 billion for the CWSRF and DWSRF, including \$11.7 billion in supplemental funding for the CWSRF, \$11.7 billion in supplemental funding for the DWSRF, \$1 billion for clean water emerging contaminants, \$4 billion for drinking water emerging contaminants, and \$15 billion for lead service line replacement; and

**Whereas**, the CWSRF and DWSRF are designed as revolving loan funds, through which low-interest loans are repaid to the SRFs, enabling states to build a permanent, predictable source of recurring revenue to finance new water infrastructure projects that ensure compliance with federal requirements; and

**Whereas**, congressionally directed spending (CDS) can be a useful and direct method for the federal government to fund high-priority projects, most often taking the form of grants that the recipient is not required to repay to the federal government; and

**Whereas**, beginning in fiscal year 2022, congressional directed spending (CDS) grants for water projects have been funded out of SRF capitalization grants, reducing the annual funding states and territories receive to administer SRFs by \$2.3 billion, or 42%; and

**Whereas**, by utilizing the CDS process to divert funding from SRF capitalization grants before they are allocated to the states, states are unable to administer the low-interest loans for water infrastructure projects that generate the recurring revenue necessary to meet the ongoing need to maintain water infrastructure; and

**Whereas**, by drastically reducing SRF capitalization grants to the states, the long-term viability of the SRFs is significantly diminished, which will have substantial impacts on future investment in water projects.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the United States Congress to prohibit congressionally directed spending for specific projects out of the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds; and

**Be It Finally Resolved**, that states should be allowed to utilize Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds funding according to intended use plans, and congressionally directed spending for water projects should be funded through a separate appropriation.

DRAFT

**Great Lakes Commission Proposed Resolution: Support for Recommendations in the  
Third Triennial Assessment of Progress on Great Lakes Water Quality  
DRAFT RESOLUTION: February 26, 2024**

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes are a resource under the shared stewardship of the United States and Canada, in addition to the states, provinces, and Indigenous Nations throughout the region; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Agreement), first agreed to by the governments of Canada and the United States in 1972, is a bilateral commitment “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Waters of the Great Lakes”; and

**Whereas**, the Agreement is a model for international cooperation, providing an important structure to address pollution and other threats to water resources, and setting forth bilateral goals to ensure enduring restoration and preservation of the Great Lakes; and

**Whereas**, the International Joint Commission (IJC) is responsible for providing the Canadian and U.S. governments (the Parties) with a report that assesses progress toward achieving the Agreement’s objectives; and

**Whereas**, the IJC released the Third Triennial Assessment of Progress on Great Lakes Water Quality in November 2023 and made three primary recommendations to the Parties:

- (1) Ensure that First Nations, Métis and Tribal governments are full, active partners in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement review process to better empower Indigenous engagement and leadership on Great Lakes water quality issues.
- (2) Increase climate resiliency throughout the region by developing basinwide goals, adopting accountable and transparent performance metrics and working to achieve them with local, regional, and provincial governments, regional watershed authorities and other stakeholders.
- (3) Proactively support and actively participate in the continued development of a 10-year Great Lakes Science Plan that works toward managing, funding, governing and implementing a coordinated and comprehensive binational science initiative; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) recognizes and seeks to increase its engagement with the Indigenous Nations whose ancestral and contemporary homelands are a part of this region and are the original stewards of the Great Lakes basin; and

**Whereas**, the GLC is committed to advancing climate resiliency in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin through implementation of its *Action Plan for a Resilient Great Lakes Basin*; and

**Whereas**, the GLC identified in its strategic plan an action to “advance the development and implementation of an ecosystem-based, long-term science and monitoring program for the Great Lakes” in coordination with other partners.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the GLC supports the recommendations made by the IJC in the Third Triennial Assessment of Progress on Great Lakes Water Quality and encourages the Parties to act on the recommendations; and

**Be It Finally Resolved**, that the Parties should work with the GLC on defining and coordinating climate resiliency activities and establishing resilience indicators and metrics.

**Great Lakes Commission Proposed Resolution:**  
**Understanding impacts to Great Lakes agriculture and water use under changing climate conditions**  
**DRAFT: February 26, 2024**

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) is authorized to “collect, correlate, interpret, and report on data relating to the water resources and the use thereof in the Basin” and to consider “balanced development, use, and conservation of the water resources of the Basin” through the Great Lakes Basin Compact of 1955; and

**Whereas**, in cooperation with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River states and provinces through a collaborative partnership with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Regional Body and Compact Council, the GLC reports annually on regional water use data including withdrawals, consumptive uses, and diversions by type of use, water source, jurisdiction, and watershed; and

**Whereas**, the changing climate has led to increased frequency and intensity of extreme heat events<sup>1</sup> and overdependency on groundwater resources resulting in public water shortages, irrigation bans, and decreased agricultural yields per acre<sup>2</sup>; which long-term will likely place more importance on maintaining soil health and food production in the Great Lakes basin; and

**Whereas**, changing climate conditions are not currently predicted to significantly alter the overall water balance of the Great Lakes basin; however, the region is experiencing fluctuating extremes and localized increases in precipitation and runoff, as well as greater usage and evaporation due to higher summer temperatures and lack of ice cover in winter; and

**Whereas**, changing climate conditions leading to increases in precipitation event frequency and intensity may contribute to both flooding events and localized drought conditions that will impact Great Lakes ecosystems, affect the lives and livelihoods of those who live in the basin, and affect how water and climate sensitive industries and economic sectors - such as agriculture - function in our communities; and

**Whereas**, climate trends within the Great Lakes basin indicate that average annual air temperatures have increased by 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit since 1951, leading to an additional one to two weeks of growing season across the region and additional temperature increases are forecasted in future decades<sup>3</sup>; and

**Whereas**, the GLC, through its Standing Committee on Climate Resilience and *Action Plan for a Resilient Great Lakes Basin*, is working to advance and coordinate climate resiliency efforts in the Great Lakes basin; and

**Whereas**, agriculture is a vital sector of the economy for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region that relies on access to water resources and faces unique risks from climate change; and

**Whereas**, understanding climate related risks and impacts to the Great Lakes basin agricultural sector is critical to ensuring the security of both countries’ agricultural economies, food systems, and rural communities, and the security, sustainability, and balanced use of the basin’s water resources under future climate scenarios.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the GLC calls on partners including the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada,

---

<sup>1</sup> First Street Foundation. (2022). First Street Foundation's 6th National Risk Assessment: Hazardous Heat. Zenodo.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6980285>. <https://firststreet.org/research-library/hazardous-heat>.

<sup>2</sup> The New York Times. (2023). America Is Using Up Its Groundwater Like There’s No Tomorrow.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/28/climate/groundwater-drying-climate-change.html>

<sup>3</sup> Hibbard, K.A., F.M. Hoffman, D. Huntzinger, and T.O. West. (2017). Changes in land cover and terrestrial biogeochemistry. In: Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I [Wuebbles, D.J., D.W. Fahey, K.A. Hibbard, D.J. Dokken, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA, pp. 277-302, doi: 10.7930/J0416V6X. <https://glisa.umich.edu/resources-tools/climate-impacts/temperature/>

and the nongovernmental community, to actively engage with the GLC toward building a coordinated scientific, technical, and economic understanding of:

- Current or baseline conditions for agricultural production in the Great Lakes basin, including acres in production, product types and yield, water use, and climate dependencies (i.e. growing days and rainfall needs) by product or commodity;
- Existing research on agricultural production in the Great Lakes basin that can inform future water demand forecasting;
- Region-specific predictions of potential agricultural production in the future including changes to acreage, product types and yield, and water use; and
- The ability of agricultural land to capture and sequester carbon and methods of measuring and documenting the extent of carbon sequestration over time; and
- The current state of groundwater management in the Great Lakes basin under the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Compact and Agreement and state or provincial law or policy intended to assure sustainable, equitable and balanced use of the basin's groundwater resources; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, to assure balanced and meaningful insights on this complex issue, the GLC will consult with representatives from the following:

- Local, state, provincial, and federal agriculture agencies and ministries;
- State and provincial water regulatory agencies and ministries;
- Indigenous communities;
- Agricultural stakeholders including producers or producer-led organizations;
- Academic institutions or agencies with specialized expertise in water or agriculture (e.g., Institutes for Water Research, state geological surveys, U.S. and Canadian geological surveys); and
- State and provincial climatologists; and

**Be It Finally Resolved**, this work will be coordinated with the GLC Standing Committee on Climate Resilience and that a report on the findings of this work and recommendation for moving forward, such as an addendum to the GLC *Action Plan for a Resilient Great Lakes Basin*, will be developed for consideration at a future GLC Annual Meeting.