



RESOLUTION

Adopted March 7, 2018

An Agenda for Great Lakes Restoration and Economic Revitalization: Great Lakes Commission federal priorities for 2018

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 rely on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River for drinking water, manufacturing, recreation, power generation, and commercial navigation and fishing; and

Whereas, benefits provided by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin continue to be threatened by, invasive species, toxic contaminants, nutrient pollution, failing and deteriorating water infrastructure, aging ports and harbors infrastructure, and degraded and under-utilized waterfront areas; and

Whereas, Congress and the Administration have supported an unprecedented partnership with the Great Lakes states and other partners to implement the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) since 2010, which strategically targets the most critical problems facing the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, the GLRI is generating significant results, with more than 3,500 restoration projects implemented; ten Areas of Concern cleaned up; more than 402,000 pounds of phosphorus prevented from entering the Great Lakes and causing harmful algal blooms; 180,000 acres of habitat and 642 miles of Great Lakes shoreline restored or protected; and pathways closed and control actions implemented to prevent the introduction of Asian carp and other harmful invasive species, including six million pounds of Asian carp removed from the Illinois River; and

Whereas, the development in 2018 of a new Farm Bill and Water Resources Reform and Development Act provide an opportunity to strengthen programs and authorities that, if fully funded and effectively implemented, will help conserve soil resources and improve water quality, and bolster the economic vitality of our region's maritime transportation system.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission endorses the following federal priorities for 2018:

- Funding the GLRI at \$300 million in FY 2019, with a focus on cleaning up heavily degraded Areas of Concern; preventing and controlling invasive species such as Asian carp; reducing polluted runoff that causes toxic algae and beach closures; and restoring and protecting habitat for valuable fish and wildlife resources;
- Preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by providing funding for successful programs, including the national task force, regional panels and state management plans established under the National Invasive Species Act, and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's sea lamprey control program; using existing authorities like the Lacey Act to identify and restrict the importation of harmful non-native species; fully funding the Asian Carp Action Plan and the National Asian Carp Management and Control Plan; and completing the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study to prevent all AIS transfer between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes watersheds.

- Safeguarding drinking water by increasing funding for and implementing reforms to expand access to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs, and facilitating private sector investment to help local communities repair failing water infrastructure and protect drinking water systems;
- Strengthening agricultural conservation programs to bolster the farm economy, protect water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat; ensuring the 2018 Farm Bill maintains and strengthens conservation programs and strategically targets watersheds that contribute polluted runoff to the Great Lakes, particularly in vulnerable areas such as Western Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, and Green Bay;
- Strengthening the Great Lakes navigation system by managing the Great Lakes as a single, integrated navigation system as directed by the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act; advancing the construction of a new large lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich; fully utilizing monies paid into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, including dedicated funding for Great Lakes ports and recreational harbors; promoting the beneficial use of dredged material to reduce open water dispersal; and increasing resources for Customs and Border Protection to facilitate cross-border movement of cargo and passengers, including cruise vessels; and

Be It Further Resolved, that federal agencies are called upon to share information and cooperate in implementing a Blue Accounting information management strategy to improve regional decisionmaking, enable adaptive management, and help Great Lakes leaders guide investments and measure progress toward our common goals for the Great Lakes; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the federal government should maintain structures to strengthen dialogue and decision-making across agencies and to coordinate with state and local initiatives, including the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force to coordinate federal agency actions; a Great Lakes Advisory Board to provide recommendations from non-federal stakeholders; an Action Plan to strategically target restoration efforts and measure progress; and annual reports to Congress to ensure accountability and the efficient implementation of Great Lakes 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 implementing the GLRI, including close consultation in developing the new GLRI Action Plan, recognizing that effective involvement from the states will improve administrative efficiency and ensure that resources are directed toward the most important restoration priorities; and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Trump 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 and maintaining core programs that provide for ongoing conservation and management of the Great Lakes.

*Adopted at the 2018 Semiannual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, March 6-7, 2018 in Washington, D.C.
The resolution was passed unanimously.*