



## RESOLUTION

Adopted May 25, 2023

# Building on Progress through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan IV

**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**, investments in water infrastructure, commercial navigation, environmental restoration, and resilience will create jobs, foster equity for underserved communities, and strengthen the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes region for future generations; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was initiated in 2009 and has received strong bipartisan support to strategically target critical problems facing the Great Lakes, including toxic substances and Areas of Concern; invasive species; nonpoint source pollution impacts on nearshore health; habitat and species; and

**Whereas**, federal investments through GLRI have demonstrated a significant return on investment, with every dollar spent generating an estimated \$3.35 in additional economic activity; and

**Whereas**, the GLRI is a landmark program that is making significant progress in restoring the waters, ecosystems, economies, and communities that make up the Great Lakes region; 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**, strong state-federal partnerships are essential to implementing a majority of GLRI efforts and the states are vital partners in ensuring successful implementation of the GLRI; and

**Whereas**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), has initiated development of GLRI Action Plan IV to strengthen and guide program implementation from fiscal years 2025-29; and

**Whereas**, in December 2022 the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) presented U.S. EPA with recommendations on development of Action Plan IV and strengthening program implementation through FY2029.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the GLC urges U.S. EPA to update the GLRI Action Plan for fiscal years 2025-29 with increased emphasis on integrated restoration planning and implementation, harmonizing GLRI with other federal programs, community engagement, and building climate resiliency; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC recommends that U.S. EPA continue to utilize transparent, robust, and well-defined stakeholder and public engagement processes for soliciting input on the development of Action Plan IV, including regular dialogue with the GLC and the states; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC calls on U.S. EPA to continue to recognize the essential roles that states play in the implementation of the GLRI Action Plan and assure the continued and robust support of state agencies and programs that are vital to Action Plan implementation; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC encourages U.S. EPA and its federal agency partners to provide more information on the distribution of funding across focus areas and develop funding priorities in close consultation with the states; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC offers its assistance and encourages U.S. EPA to dedicate resources to support defining and coordinating resiliency activities and establishing resilience indicators and metrics; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC offers it assistance to U.S. EPA and other federal agencies in the development and tracking of progress metrics, such as through the use of Blue Accounting; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC supports the appointment of a harmful algal bloom (HAB) coordinator, as called for in 33 U.S. Code § 1268 (Public Law 114–322), to coordinate Great Lakes HABs activities, working directly with focus area leads, Annex 4, and the Great Lakes HABs Collaborative; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the GLC calls on Congress to continue funding for the GLRI through fiscal year 2029 to maintain the momentum underway, build on investments made by the Great Lakes states and other partners, and facilitate the long-term success of the regional restoration program; and

**Be It Finally Resolved**, that the GLC commends U.S. EPA and the other federal agencies, along with state agencies and countless local and nongovernment partners, for their dedication and hard work in implementing the GLRI and urges continued collaboration with the Great Lakes states to sustain its effectiveness.

*Adopted at the 2023 Semiannual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, May 23-25, 2023,  
held in Chicago, Illinois. The resolution was passed unanimously.*