

Adopted on March 1, 2011

Resolution: Advancing Great Lakes Restoration and Economic Revitalization: Great Lakes Commission Fiscal Year 2012 Federal Priorities

Whereas, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River are a national treasure and an environmental and economic asset of vital importance to the eight Great Lakes states and the nation as a whole; and

Whereas, 45 million Americans and Canadians depend on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River for drinking water, recreation, fish and wildlife resources, power generation and commercial navigation, among other benefits; and

Whereas, these benefits from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River continue to be threatened by the release of untreated sewage, invasive species, toxic contaminants, deteriorating water infrastructure, inadequately maintained ports and harbors and other causes; and

Whereas, maintaining the navigation infrastructure on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system protects over 44,000 jobs directly related to the marine transportation sector, over 190,000 jobs in the industries it serves, and some 60,000 jobs related to recreational boating in the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes region has united behind the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*, a comprehensive restoration plan that is endorsed by the Great Lakes states, cities, industries, tribal governments and environmental organizations; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes states have further demonstrated their long-term commitment to the Great Lakes by adopting the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact to ensure that the quantity of our waters are managed for the well-being of future generations; 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), which is strategically targeting the most critical problems facing the Great Lakes by

- Preventing and eradicating aquatic invasive species, such as Asian carp
- Cleaning up contaminated sediments under the Great Lakes Legacy Act
- Controlling polluted runoff and cleaning up beach pollution
- Restoring degraded wetlands
- Conserving and enhancing valuable fish and wildlife resources; 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 goals into site-specific actions that generate real benefits for local communities; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes states are critical partners in the success of the GLRI with the best knowledge and experience to ensure that resources are targeted at local priorities and several of the Great Lakes states have adopted Great Lakes restoration strategies and plans to complement federal restoration activities in their states; and

Whereas, The Brookings Institution has documented a two-to-one return on investment from restoring the Great Lakes and 25 metropolitan Chambers of Commerce have identified the Great Lakes as a key element for advancing their *Agenda for Jobs and Economic Transformation in the Great Lakes Region*, underscoring the potential to leverage the Great Lakes to create jobs, stimulate economic development and profit from freshwater resources that will be central to the future of the nation and the eight-state Great Lakes region; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Basin Compact calls on the Great Lakes Commission to advocate on behalf of the eight Great Lakes states in support of issues of common interest.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission endorses a suite of federal priorities for Fiscal Year 2012, with a primary focus on

- Maintaining sufficient annual funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to achieve the \$2.2 billion needed over five years to implement our Great Lakes restoration strategy
- Giving the Great Lakes states greater authority over how the GLRI is implemented
- Protecting water quality through full funding of the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Revolving Funds
- Establishing strong protections against Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species and sustaining critical near-term monitoring and control actions to protect against the urgent threat posed by Asian carp while also pursuing separation of the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River watershed as the best permanent, long-term solution to safeguarding the lakes.

Be it further resolved, that these priorities are shared with the 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 and the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition; and

Be it further resolved, that the Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to strengthen collaboration with the eight Great Lakes states and give them greater authority over how the GLRI is implemented, recognizing that elevating their role will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and ensure that resources are directed at the most important on-the-ground restoration priorities in shoreline communities; and

Be it further resolved, that in the interest of maintaining critical navigation infrastructure in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence system, the Great Lakes Commission calls upon Congress to reform the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund by acting on legislation requiring that expenditures from the fund in future years be applied to the purpose for which they were originally intended: the operation and maintenance of federal ports, harbors and navigation channels serving commercial and recreational traffic; and

Be it finally resolved, the Great Lakes Commission calls on President Obama 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 together with core programs that provide for ongoing conservation and management of the Great Lakes.