

Adopted Feb. 28, 2012

## **Resolution: Priorities for Advancing Great Lakes Restoration and Economic Revitalization: Great Lakes Commission Federal Priorities for FY 2013**

**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, the nation as a whole and the North American economy; and

**Whereas**, 36 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**, 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, Ontario and Québec have further demonstrated their long-term commitment to the Great Lakes by adopting the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact and Agreement 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

- shutting the door on 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 2-to-1 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 2013, with a primary focus on

- maintaining funding for the GLRI to build on investments from the Great Lakes states and local partners and sustain the progress being made to restore the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes;
- establishing strong protections against Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species, including full implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework and other prevention and control measures; accelerated study of options for separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds; effective and achievable ballast water management regulations that are harmonized binationally; and legislation to strengthen federal programs that prevent the introduction of invasive species via the trade in live organisms;
- protecting water quality by funding the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs to repair failing water infrastructure, separate combined sewers and upgrade sewage treatment plants to prevent the release of nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes;
- reauthorizing the Farm Bill and including strong provisions for conservation programs that address soil and water conservation needs on a priority watershed basis and support sustainable agricultural practices; and
- improving infrastructure for commercial navigation and recreational boating by reforming the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and providing funding to the Army Corps of Engineers for the Great Lakes Navigation Operations and Maintenance budget to dredge commercial and recreational harbors.

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to continue to strengthen collaboration with the eight Great Lakes states in the implementation of the GLRI, recognizing that elevating their role will improve administrative efficiency and ensure that resources are directed at the most important on-the-ground restoration priorities in shoreline communities; 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.