
Adopted Oct. 8, 2010

Resolution: Maintaining Leadership and Sustaining Progress in Restoring the Great Lakes and Revitalizing Our Regional Economy

Whereas, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River are national treasures and environmental and economic assets of vital importance to the eight Great Lakes states, Ontario, Québec and two nations; 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, 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 declining water levels due to climate change and other causes; and

Whereas, priorities established in 2003 by the governors of the eight Great Lakes states provided the foundation on which the region came together to develop the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*, a comprehensive restoration plan that has been broadly endorsed by the Great Lakes governors, states, cities, industries, tribal governments, federal agencies and environmental organizations; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission and the Council of Great Lakes Governors, in close collaboration with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Healing Our Water-Great Lakes Coalition, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Council of Great Lakes Industries, Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition and a diverse array of other stakeholders have maintained a consistent and united regional voice calling for a robust federal-state partnership to implement the Great Lakes restoration strategy; and

Whereas, with leadership from the president, U.S. EPA and bipartisan support from Congress, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was initiated in 2009 as a five-year program with a budget of \$2.2 billion designed to strategically target the most critical problems facing the Great Lakes, including

- Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern
- Invasive Species
- Nearshore Health and Nonpoint Source Pollution
- Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration
- Accountability, Education, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication, and Partnerships; and

Whereas, the GLRI advances the key federal policy goal of maximizing the benefits of the Great Lakes and investing in freshwater resources that will be central to the future of our nations and the Great Lakes region; and

Whereas, the GLRI has established key components for an effective, five-year restoration program, including a detailed Action Plan with clear performance goals, an accountability system, an independent scientific review panel, and a funding plan that strategically aligns existing programs with those goals; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes states have stepped forward to partner with the federal government to implement the GLRI by building capacity, translating the Initiative’s regional goals into site-specific actions, and providing the infrastructure needed to generate meaningful benefits for citizens in the Great Lakes region; and

Whereas; an unprecedented investment of time, human capital and scarce fiscal resources—at all levels of government—have launched the GLRI and put it on a trajectory to success; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Basin Compact authorizes the Great Lakes Commission to advocate on behalf of the eight Great Lakes states in support of issues of common interest and, using this authority, the Commission has been a leading voice for full funding of the GLRI, and has advised Congress and federal agencies on principles for its implementation in a manner consistent with the views and priorities of the Great Lakes states.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to maintain their commitment to restoring the Great Lakes by approving legislation that will authorize sustained funding for the GLRI to build on past investments and ensure continued progress in environmental restoration and economic revitalization; and

Be it further resolved, that the Commission calls on its member states, together with local governments, business, academia and nongovernmental partners to continue their engagement in implementing the GLRI; and

Be it further resolved, that the Commission urges the region’s new and continuing political leaders—whether governors, state legislators, or members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation—to keep faith with their citizens who treasure the Great Lakes and have committed to restoring and conserving them as a source of cultural identity and economic prosperity;

Be it finally resolved, that the Commission reaffirms its mission and responsibility—as codified in federal and state law—to help its member states and provinces speak with a unified voice and collectively fulfill their vision for a healthy, vibrant Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region by advising the federal governments of the importance of full funding for the GLRI and other programs critical for Great Lakes protection and restoration.