



Great Lakes
Commission
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2023 Federal Priorities

Fully fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Appropriate \$425 million to maintain progress in restoring North America's greatest freshwater resource.

Comprehensively address the causes of harmful algal blooms

Fund conservation programs that reduce nutrient pollution; fund research to expand forecasting capabilities and knowledge of health impacts.

Unlock the potential of the Great Lakes Navigation System

Strengthen the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River navigation system to support safe, efficient, and cost-effective movement of passengers and goods.

Build a resilient Great Lakes basin

Support federal, tribal, state, and local actions to ensure the economy and environment of the Great Lakes region are resilient to the adverse impacts of a changing climate.

Protect against invasive species

Invest in approaches that will stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.

Ensure equitable access to clean and safe water

Upgrade infrastructure to ensure equitable access to clean and safe water.

Support integrated binational science and data collection

Support coordinated regional science and data collection to improve planning and evidence-based decision-making.

Fund the Great Lakes Commission to fulfill its unique role in the region

Provide dedicated, sustainable funding to the GLC to fulfill its unique role in the region.

Enact a five-year Farm Bill in 2023

Build upon policies that promote agricultural growth, sustainability, resilience, and conservation.

These priorities reflect well-established needs and opportunities for strengthening the economic and environmental health of the Great Lakes basin. They enjoy broad support among state and local leaders, business and industry, and the environmental community. **Investing in these priorities will foster a more equitable Great Lakes region, increase economic opportunity, and improve the health of important ecosystems throughout the Great Lakes basin.**

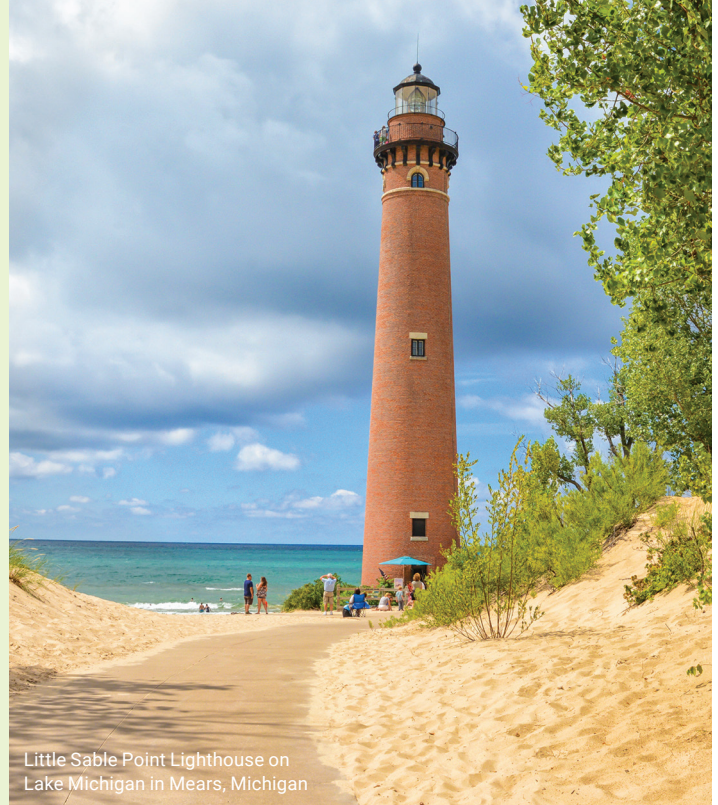
Fully fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to maintain progress in restoring North America's greatest freshwater resource

- Appropriate no less than \$425 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in FY 2024, as authorized by the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019*. These funds should be in addition to the supplemental \$200 million for FY 2024 included in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)*.
- Ensure full funding and maximize utilization of collaborative efforts under the GLRI that facilitate information-sharing and coordinate regional activities, including the Great Lakes Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Collaborative, Invasive Mussel Collaborative, and Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative.

Fund conservation programs that reduce the nutrient pollution leading to harmful algal blooms (HABs); fund research to expand forecasting capabilities and knowledge of health impacts

- Increase funding for restoration of natural systems, which slow the flow of nutrient-laden water.
- Accelerate research into HAB dynamics, including early detection and forecasting of potential toxicity of blooms.
- Fund research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to increase understanding of the human health effects of HABs.

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore on Lake Superior in Bayfield, Wisconsin



Little Sable Point Lighthouse on Lake Michigan in Mears, Michigan

Strengthen the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River navigation system to support safe, efficient, and cost-effective movement of goods

- Appropriate \$750 million for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP). These funds should be in addition to the supplemental \$450 million for FY 2024 included in the *IIJA*.
- Fund construction of a new heavy icebreaker for the Great Lakes and maintenance of existing icebreaking vessels to ensure the Coast Guard can remove ice jams and maintain federal navigation channels in the Great Lakes.
- Congress should provide an exemption to the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) for non-bulk cargo transported between U.S. ports and between Canada and the U.S. in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River navigation system to enable short sea shipping on the Great Lakes.
- Provide funding, pursuant to the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, to assist in development of measures that can be implemented by the Great Lakes fleet to minimize the risk of aquatic invasive species (AIS) spread.
- Appropriate funds and provide direction to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to dedicate adequate resources to facilitate movement of cargo and passengers on the U.S./Canada border, including timely clearance of containerized cargo in Great Lakes ports.
- Increase U.S. CBP resource allocations on the northern border to reflect the importance and durability of the trade and national security relationship between the U.S. and Canada.

Support federal, tribal, state, and local actions to ensure the economy and environment of the Great Lakes region are resilient to the adverse impacts of a changing climate

- Ensure funding for federal forecasting and modeling for lake level variability, extreme storm events, precipitation, and flooding impacts on the Great Lakes basin.
- Ensure federal grants for coastal resilience projects provide dedicated funding to the Great Lakes region. These grants should support technical assistance, coastal resilience planning, and mitigation in both high- and low-water conditions, and nonfederal cost-sharing requirements should be minimized to assist smaller and disadvantaged communities.

Invest in approaches that will stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species

- Authorize the Brandon Road Project at full federal expense, including construction, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, and nonstructural measures.
- Direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study to prevent AIS transfer between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes watersheds.
- Fund essential AIS programs including regional panels and state management plans established under the National Invasive Species Act, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's sea lamprey control program, and the Invasive Carp Action Plan.



Grand Marais, Minnesota, on Lake Superior

Upgrade infrastructure to ensure equitable access to clean and safe water

- Prioritize projects funded by the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds that improve water quality in historically underrepresented areas.
- Implement U.S. EPA's PFAS Action Plan; establish a federal drinking water standard for PFAS; and support efforts to improve monitoring, detection, and coordination between state and federal agencies to clean up PFAS pollution from former military bases and other sources.

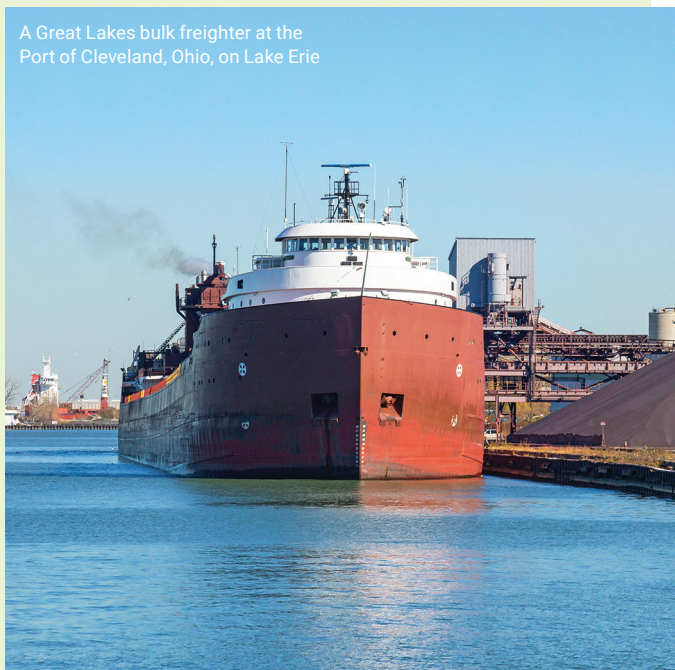
Support coordinated regional science and data collection to improve planning and evidence-based decision-making

- Fund cross-cutting planning efforts to coordinate and develop regional science and data collection in the Great Lakes, including the International Joint Commission decadal science plan and the U.S. Geological Survey science plan.
- Ensure science funding is adequately allocated to support Great Lakes science and data gathering, regional observing systems and recapitalization of science vessels.
- Fund specific research to better understand and target reductions and remediation of the highest risk sources and forms of mercury contamination, and how climate stressors may impact mercury pollution and exposure in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region.

Provide dedicated, sustainable funding to the Great Lakes Commission to fulfill its unique role in the region

- Appropriate \$3 million to the GLC in FY 2024 so it has adequate resources and capacity to ensure states and the federal government are coordinated and communicating on the implementation of important federal and regional programs; track the region's progress toward shared goals for the Great Lakes; and proactively identify and advance priorities for congressional and federal agency action.

A Great Lakes bulk freighter at the Port of Cleveland, Ohio, on Lake Erie



Enact the 2023 Farm Bill to Promote Agricultural Growth, Sustainability, and Conservation

The Great Lakes Commission encourages Congress to enact a new, five-year Farm Bill that builds upon policies that promote agricultural growth, sustainability, resilience, and conservation. Specifically, the GLC recommends that the 2023 Farm Bill include the following items:

Title I: Commodities

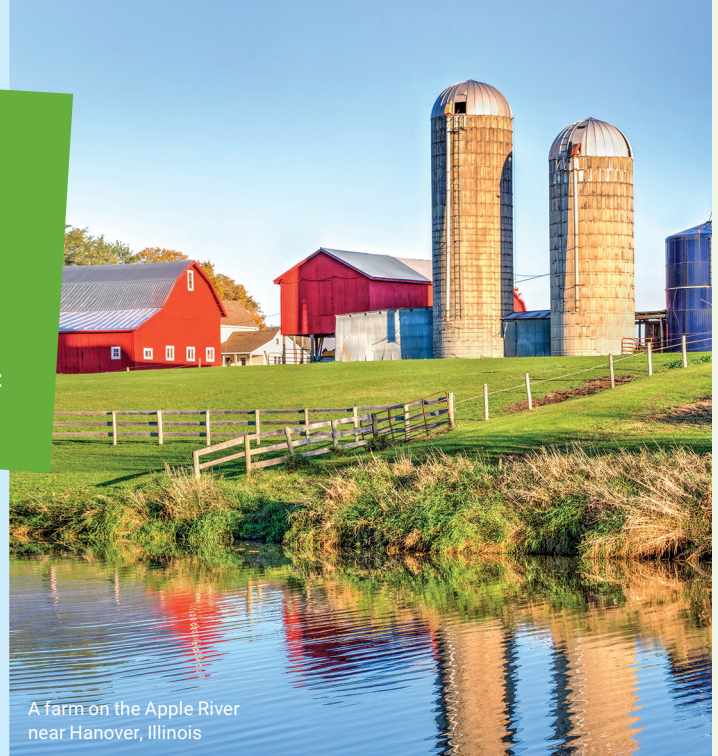
- USDA disaster assistance programs should coordinate with state agencies leading investigations into PFAS in the Great Lakes region.

Title II: Conservation

- Continue support for the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) as a tool to identify high-impact locations for the placement of conservation practices.
- USDA should collaborate with other federal agencies to develop integrated, reliable, and easy to use models that generate information on upstream and downstream water quality impacts arising from practice installation, as well as information on field conditions such as changes in soil health, inputs, and yield.
- Emphasize Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program and Regional Conservation Partnership Program to support long-term transformation of agricultural operations that protect local waterways and reduce costs to farmers.
- Enhance Farm Bill investments to retain and restore wetlands in the Great Lakes basin by promoting landowner participation in the *Phragmites* Adaptive Management Framework (PAMF) to manage invasive *Phragmites australis* (common reed). Provide information on management approaches to recipients of funds through Farm Bill programming including the Conserve Reserve and Reserve Enhancement Programs and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

Title VI: Rural Development

- Expand support for water infrastructure programs, including the expansion of funding for nature-based solutions to manage stormwater.



A farm on the Apple River
near Hanover, Illinois

Title VII: Research

- Continue research to identify conservation practices that reduce the nutrient pollution that contributes to harmful algal blooms.
- Collaborate with USGS to understand water quality impacts from the agriculture industry.
- Continue to partner with state and federal agencies to assess emerging practices such as prairie strips, phosphorus filters, and wetland enhancement.

Title VIII: Forestry

- Continue and expand the State and Private Forest Landscape-Scale Restoration Program to support the Great Lakes states' efforts to collaboratively restore and enhance the basin's forest landscapes.
- Expand opportunities for communities interested in protecting sources of drinking water through riparian plantings and other watershed-based efforts.

About the Great Lakes Commission The Great Lakes Commission is a binational government agency established in 1955 to protect the Great Lakes and the economies and ecosystems they support. Its membership includes leaders from the eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces in the Great Lakes basin. The GLC recommends policies and practices to balance the use, development, and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes and brings the region together to work on issues that no single community, state, province, or nation can tackle alone.