

Shared Priorities for the Great Lakes

Advancing Equitable Restoration,
Revitalization, and Resilience

2024

Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is an enduring, bipartisan priority for the nation and for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin communities. Our organizations support the following priorities to accelerate progress, foster equity, build resilience, and ensure the Great Lakes are a source of drinking water, an environmental treasure, and an economic engine for North America.



Great Lakes Fishery
Commission



Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority



GREAT LAKES METRO CHAMBERS COALITION



GREAT LAKES
BUSINESS NETWORK



LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION



Capitalize on investment in Great Lakes restoration

- Congress should appropriate no less than \$450 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in FY 2025. This should be in addition to the supplemental \$200 million for FY 2025 included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).
- Pass S.3738 and H.R.7257 to reauthorize GLRI at \$500 million per year for fiscal years 2027 to 2031.
- Ensure key federal programs have the staff capacity and resources to support Great Lakes restoration work, advancing strong annual appropriations and rejecting any proposed rescissions. GLRI is not meant to supplant base funding for federal agency environmental and restoration programs.
- Support updating the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action plan, which expires in fiscal year 2024, to prioritize the region's top restoration priorities, targets communities hit hardest by pollution and include clear priorities that help communities avoid the impacts of extreme weather.

Ensure water infrastructure investments tackle historic inequities

- Congress should fully fund the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds and monitor the equitable distribution of IIJA resources to ensure the Great Lakes region receives appropriate funding to improve water equity and quality. **Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for water projects should be funded through a separate appropriation.**
- Congress should amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to incorporate revised inventory data from the October 2024 Lead and Copper Rule into DWSRF allocation formulas, safeguarding equitable distribution of IIJA funds for lead pipe replacement in the final two years of implementation. Additionally, Congress should fund and encourage the quick completion of the delayed update to the Clean Watersheds Needs Survey to more equitably distribute CWSRF allocations.
- Prioritize projects and programs, including robust technical assistance, in communities hit hardest by pollution and aging infrastructure to advance equitable access to affordable, clean, and safe drinking water. This should include efforts to replace all lead pipes and to address source water protection and contamination of groundwater aquifers.
- Invest in federal industry or sector partnership grants to expand workforce development and employment opportunities to expedite lead pipe replacement and address water equity throughout the Great Lakes blue economy.

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Enhance the Great Lakes' resiliency to the impacts of a changing climate

- Continue to fund and advance the Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study and ensure project partners conduct robust, proactive local engagement in order to identify ways to safeguard coastal communities from erosion, flooding, and other impacts from fluctuating lake levels.
- Reject any proposed funding rescissions of key Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) climate and resilience investments, ensure federal coastal resilience programs dedicate funding for the Great Lakes region, and support planning and project implementation work. Encourage federal agencies to coordinate on and streamline application processes for coastal resilience programs to help states, tribal nations, and communities navigate opportunities, as well as minimize non-federal cost sharing requirements for small and/or historically underinvested communities.
- Support investments in clean energy infrastructure to reduce emissions, protect public health, create green jobs, and increase climate resiliency in the Great Lakes region.

Develop coordinated regional science

- Fund Great Lakes base science budgets for federal and regional agencies to ensure decisions are informed by the best available information, including traditional Indigenous knowledge. Agencies should undertake an integrated, binational science plan to address the current and future needs of the Great Lakes.

Strengthen Great Lakes ports and the maritime transportation system

- Improve icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes by fully funding a new Great Lakes icebreaker at least as capable as the USCGC Mackinaw, including an FY25 appropriation of at least \$55 million in Procurement, Construction and Improvement funds.
- Maintain and upgrade commercial ports and recreational harbors, channels, locks, breakwaters, jetties and other navigation infrastructure in a sustainable and resilient manner.
- Fully and efficiently fund construction of the New Lock at the Soo and continue to fund the Soo Locks Asset Renewal, both are necessary to reduce the risk of a supply chain failure.
- Similar to the Canadian Government's support of its vessel operators, the U.S. should provide grant funding to support the Great Lakes Green Shipping Corridor Network.

Support federal action to address harmful algal blooms (HABs)

- Fully fund the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and other Farm Bill conservation programs to target resources to the Great Lakes basin and support farmers working to improve water quality and protect wildlife habitat.
- Prioritize Farm Bill programs to improve water quality and ensure accountability through numeric, water-quality based outcomes.

Take action to address emerging contaminants

- Support measures to address contaminants like PFAS, microplastics, nutrient pollution, and other toxic substances that threaten Great Lakes water quality.
- Support states and communities related to the implementation of EPA's forthcoming maximum contaminant levels for PFOA and PFOS, including nationwide PFAS testing and treatment for impacted water supplies and private wells, and provide clear and comprehensive risk assessment and guidance related to application of biosolids related to PFAS on land.

Protect the Great Lakes basin from invasive carp and other aquatic invasive species

- Authorize 100% federal cost share for construction, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, and non-structural measures at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act to help keep invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes.
- Provide funding for successful programs including the Great Lakes and other regional AIS panels and state AIS 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. Prioritize funding for early detection and rapid response activities.