

2026 Shared Priorities for the Great Lakes

Protecting and Restoring North America's Largest Water System



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 ensure the Great Lakes are a source of drinking water, an environmental treasure, and an economic engine now and into the future.**



Great Lakes Fishery Commission



Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority



GREAT LAKES METRO CHAMBERS COALITION



LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION
★★★★★

Continue producing restoration results

- Appropriate no less than \$500 million for the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)** in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.
- Pass S.528 and H.R.284 to **reauthorize GLRI at \$500 million per year** for fiscal years 2027 to 2031. Every dollar spent on GLRI has been shown to produce at least \$3.35 of additional economic activity in the region.
- Ensure 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.

Provide clean drinking water to all

- Fund the **Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds** at the fully authorized level to further close the water infrastructure investment gap while targeting the distribution of resources at the places hardest-hit by pollution. The Great Lakes region must receive appropriate funding to improve water quality and support a strong regional economy. Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for water projects should be funded through a separate appropriation.
- Prioritize projects and programs, including robust technical assistance, in communities hit hardest by pollution and aging infrastructure to advance fair 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.
- Affirm announced federal investments to states, Indigenous nations, and communities for lead service line replacement, including new and existing funds, to appropriately fund the implementation of Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, including the ten-year lead service line replacement timeline for most communities.

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Enhance the Great Lakes Navigation System

- Maintain and upgrade commercial ports and recreational harbors, channels, locks, breakwaters, jetties and other **navigation infrastructure** in a sustainable and resilient manner to continue to grow regional trade and connect port communities.
- Fully and efficiently fund construction of the New Lock at the Soo and continue to fund the **Soo Locks** Asset Renewal, both of which are necessary to reduce the risk of a supply chain failure.
- 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 FY27 appropriation through the Department of Homeland Security of \$250 million in Procurement, Construction and Improvement funds.

Strengthen communities

- Support investments in **alternative energy** infrastructure to reduce emissions, protect public health, create jobs, strengthen North American energy independence by expanding alternative energy sources, promote energy affordability, and increase climate resiliency in the Great Lakes region.
- Support agriculture's important role in the Great Lakes economy, emphasizing **Farm Bill** programs that allow farmers to provide world-class agricultural products while also protecting the world's greatest source of fresh water.
- 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.

Protect people from persistent and emerging threats

- 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 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.
- Authorize 100% federal cost share for operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, and non-structural measures at the Brandon Road Interbasin Project to help keep **invasive carp** from entering the Great Lakes.
- Provide funding for successful **aquatic invasive species** 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.

Secure a prosperous future

- Invest in federal industry or sector partnership grants to expand local **workforce development** and employment opportunities to foster the long-term health of water infrastructure to ensure everyone benefits from the Great Lakes economy.
- 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.
- Provide additional, dedicated funding to modernize the **Great Lakes science vessel fleet**.
- 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.

