



Great Lakes-St. Lawrence
Legislative Caucus

Model Policies to Reduce Nutrient Pollution in the Great Lakes Region

The problem of excess nutrients in the Great Lakes and other waterbodies in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region is a serious threat to water quality. Nutrient pollution produces harmful algal blooms in western Lake Erie, Michigan's Saginaw Bay, Green Bay in Wisconsin, and other locations throughout the region. States and provinces can help to remedy this problem through policies, programs, and funding directed at keeping nutrients out of the water.

The Task Force on Nutrient Management of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC) developed the following policy recommendations for consideration by the state and provincial legislatures in the Great Lakes basin. The adoption of consistent, effective measures to reduce nutrient pollution will help to ensure that clean, safe water is available to the region's residents and supports tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Engage with and incentivize agricultural producers to adopt best practices for managing nutrients

- Establish voluntary conservation certification programs for agricultural operations ([Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program](#), [Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program](#)):
 - Require verification that producers are following best management practices.
 - Adopt innovative financing mechanisms to increase the number of farms participating in the program.
 - Allow state and provincial funding to be used for investments in machinery and equipment to improve the management of nutrients.
- Establish and promote competitive agricultural producer-led watershed management grants ([Wisconsin Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program](#)).



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Engage in educational and outreach activities to share information on the causes and impacts of nutrient pollution and the role each person can play in reducing the problem

- Promote collaboration across roles, sectors, and branches of government to involve all responsible parties and affected stakeholders, including members of the public and researchers, in evaluating the effectiveness of public policies intended to reduce nutrient pollution.
- Encourage efforts to educate agricultural producers, local governments officials, and members of the public regarding the impact of nutrient pollution on water quality and best management practices for reducing polluted runoff.
- Require green infrastructure to be included in education and outreach programs for discharge permits (NPDES, for states) and establish green infrastructure as a preferred best management practice

Ensure accountability for investments made by collaborating with other jurisdictions to define metrics and assess collective progress

- Designate an agency liaison to the Great Lakes Commission for the purposes of:
 - Working with the Commission to define a regional set of metrics for reporting on progress in reducing nutrient pollution.
 - Reporting results to the Commission at least annually for posting on the [Blue Accounting](#) platform.
- Require agencies to make progress reports publicly accessible on agency web sites.

Include the installation of green infrastructure among the tools used to improve the management of nutrients

- Expressly authorize and streamline procedures for the creation of storm water utilities.
- Establish enforceable post-construction requirements that set specific stormwater runoff quality and/or quantity standards.

Approved by the GLLC Executive Committee, September 15, 2020.