

Shared Priorities for the Great Lakes: *Advancing Equitable Restoration, Revitalization, and Resilience*

2023

Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is an enduring, bipartisan priority for the nation and for Great Lakes 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.

Capitalize on Investment in Great Lakes Restoration

- Congress should appropriate no less than \$425 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in FY 2024. This should be in addition to the supplemental \$200 million for FY 2024 included in the IIJA.
- Ensure key federal programs have the staff and capacity to support Great Lakes restoration work. GLRI is not meant to supplant base funding for federal agency restoration programs.
- Support updating the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action plan, which expires 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 to ensure the Great Lakes region receives appropriate funding to improve water equity and quality. Congress should continue to encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to complete the 2022 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey Assessment while incorporating available data on lead pipe burden.
- Prioritize projects and programs, including robust technical assistance, in communities hit hardest by pollution and aging infrastructure to advance equitable access to affordable, clean, 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.

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

- Continue to fund and advance the work of the Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study to identify ways to safeguard coastal communities from erosion, flooding, and other impacts from fluctuating lake levels.
- Ensure federal grants for coastal resilience projects provide dedicated funding to the Great Lakes region. These grants should support coastal resilience planning and mitigation, incorporating upstream protection and restoration. Non-federal cost sharing requirements should be minimized to assist smaller and disadvantaged communities.

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 FY24 appropriation of at least \$40 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.

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.

**** Draft – February 10, 2023 ****

- Prioritize Farm Bill programs to improve water quality and ensure accountability through numeric, water-quality based outcomes

Take action to address emerging contaminants

- Encourage approval of the EPA 2022 proposed rule to designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances and continue to provide funding assistance to hard-hit communities to tackle PFAS contamination in drinking water.
- 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 WRDA 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.

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