

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

February 2022

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



We commend the historic federal investment in Great Lakes restoration, water infrastructure, and climate resilience through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This includes important investments in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds, lead pipe removal, and other programs. We appreciate Congress' recognition that supplemental appropriations will accelerate progress for important restoration and infrastructure programs in addition to annual appropriations.

Capitalize on Investment in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

- Appropriate no less than \$400 million for the GLRI in FY 2023. This should be in addition to the supplemental \$200 million for FY 2023 included in the IIJA.
- Ensure key federal programs have the capacity to support Great Lakes restoration work.

Ensure water infrastructure investments tackle historic inequities

- Prioritize projects and programs in underserved communities that advance equitable access to affordable, clean, safe drinking water, including efforts to deploy federal, state and local resources to replace all lead pipes over the next decade, and address emerging contaminants such as PFAS. Ensure the Great Lakes region receives an appropriate share of nationwide funding for infrastructure investments that improve water quality, habitat and resiliency.

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

- Fund the Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, authorized in 2018 and 2020, to identify ways to safeguard coastal communities from erosion, flooding, and other impacts from changing 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 in both high- and low-water conditions, and non-federal cost sharing requirements should be minimized to assist smaller and disadvantaged communities.

Develop coordinated regional science and workforce opportunities

- Fund Great Lakes base science budgets for federal and regional agencies to ensure decisions are informed by the best available information. Agencies should develop an integrated, binational science plan to address the current and future needs of the Great Lakes.
- Invest in federal industry or sector partnership grants to expand workforce development and employment opportunities for individuals to enter high-wage and in-demand industry sectors or occupations throughout the Great Lakes blue economy.

Strengthen Great Lakes ports and the maritime transportation system

- Maintain and upgrade commercial ports, locks and other navigation infrastructure and recreational harbors, including adequate icebreaking capacity, including full funding for a new Great Lakes Icebreaker with BBB funding, using ecologically protective and sustainable measures.

Support federal programs 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

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

- Authorize full federal funding for construction, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, and non-structural measures at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project in the 2022 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.

Photo: Sand dunes on the shoreline of Ludington State Park on Lake Michigan in Mason County, Michigan.