

2025 Policy Priorities

1. Reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is leading clean water, community, and environmental restoration efforts across the region. Work is underway or completed on more than 8,100 restoration projects that are improving the lives of millions of people across Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. These projects are benefiting communities, strengthening their resilience to flooding and extreme weather, and cleaning up the source of drinking water for over 30 million Americans.

While there has been significant progress, the job is not done and Congress must:

- Reauthorize the GLRI for an additional 5 years, pass the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2025 (H.R. 284/S.528).

2. Invest in Great Lakes Restoration

Great Lakes restoration investments are producing economic and ecological results. But serious threats remain. Congress must end funding uncertainty and pass robust FY2025 appropriations and move forward with full funding for key restoration programs in FY2026.

We urge Congress:

- Fully fund core agency staff and clean water programs at EPA, DOI, NOAA, and USACE critical to the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes and our communities.
- Fund Great Lakes Restoration programs at:
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI):
 - FY25 – Fund at no less than \$371 million.
 - FY26 – Fully fund at \$475 million.
 - Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration (GLFWRA):
 - FY25 – Fund at no less than \$3 million.
 - FY26 – Fully fund at \$8 million.
 - Army Corps Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER):
 - FY25 – Fully fund at \$15 million.
 - FY26 – Fully fund at \$15 million.
 - Defense against invasive carp through the U.S. FWS and USGS invasive carp programs:
 - FY25 – Fund at no less than \$31 and \$11 million, respectively.
 - FY26 – Fund at no less than \$35 and \$15 million, respectively.

3. Invest in Water Infrastructure

The Great Lakes region is grappling with crumbling and unsafe [drinking water](#) and [wastewater](#) infrastructure. Our communities need a staggering \$225 billion+ over 20 years to improve, upgrade, and repair drinking water and wastewater systems. Work that is increasingly unaffordable with costs too often being passed on to the communities that can least afford it. Investing in our region's water infrastructure would not only protect public health but allow for important infrastructure upgrades improving the resiliency of our communities, reducing maintenance and operational costs, and creating good paying local jobs.

Congress must, at a minimum:

- Fund key water infrastructure programs at no less than:
 - *Clean Water State Revolving Fund:*
 - FY25 – Fund at no less than \$1.64 billion.
 - FY26 – Fully fund at \$4.9 billion.
 - *Drinking Water State Revolving Fund:*
 - FY25 – Fund at no less than \$1.13 billion.
 - FY26 – Fully fund at \$4.4 billion.
 - Reject any rescissions or impoundments of critical infrastructure investments passed under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (P.L. 117-58).
- Reauthorize water infrastructure programs, including the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. Ensuring Congress:
 - Maximizes funding provided as grants or forgivable loans to those communities most impacted by pollution.
 - Supports robust staffing at EPA program offices to ensure effective implementation and to provide technical assistance to states and communities.

4. Strengthen Clean Water Protections

Too many cities and towns are living with unsafe water, and we need to do more to protect our Lakes, waterways, and drinking water sources. Legacy pollutants persist, lead pipes contaminate drinking water, PFAS threatens human and environmental health, and rollbacks to federal regulations have weakened clean water protections.

Congress must make addressing these regional and national issues a priority:

- Protect core EPA and USACE staffing critical to implementing and enforcing clean water protections.
- Support efforts to reinstate longstanding Clean Water Act protections for wetlands and waterways that safeguard downstream communities and the environment that have lost protected status.
- Support the establishment of drinking water standards for toxic PFAS, ensuring dischargers are subject to limits under the Clean Water Act and fund remediation.
- Direct EPA to exercise its responsibility under the Clean Water Act to establish numeric water pollution standards for nutrients and other pollutants driving toxic algal blooms.

5. Pass a Clean Water Farm Bill

The Great Lakes region is a major agricultural center, though essential to our country's food system the land and water use practices promoted by this agricultural system have come at a great cost to water quality and public health. The Farm Bill is a critical opportunity for Congress to advance legislation that will protect the Great Lakes, enhance water quality across the watershed, address the threat of toxic algal blooms, invest in community development, infrastructure, public health, and support the implementation of sustainable farming practices and alternative cropping systems.

Congress must come to an agreement and pass a Farm Bill that:

- Support Farm Bill Conservation Funding and staffing at NRCS, ensuring programs such as RCPP, EQIP, and CRP can support the training, research, monitoring, and implementation of sustainable conservation practices that our farmers rely on.
- Require the development of water-quality based standards to reduce agricultural runoff, tying funding through conservation and other major assistance programs to the implementation of agricultural best practices for clean water outcomes.

CONTACT US. WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

Since 2004, the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition has been harnessing the collective power of more than 185 groups representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

Learn more at HealthyLakes.org or follow us on social media [@HealthyLakes](https://twitter.com/HealthyLakes).

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