

# SUPPORT GREAT LAKES RESTORATION TODAY

Federal investments to restore the Great Lakes are producing results for the environment and economy. But serious threats remain. Take action:

- ✓ Support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- ✓ Ensure Safe, Affordable Drinking Water for All
- ✓ Oppose Clean Water Rollbacks
- ✓ Support Great Lakes Priorities in the Water Resources Development Act 2020





Formerly vacant lots like this one in Cleveland, Ohio, are now community gathering places that can also help filter and slow runoff before it enters city drains and nearby lakes. Native plants help filter stormwater and are good for pollinators and other wildlife. Signs at each location explain the science behind the restoration work that has enhanced these formerly vacant lots.

## Support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

### PROVIDE \$350 MILLION FOR THE GLRI IN FY2021

The Great Lakes provide drinking water for more than 30 million people. Yet they face serious threats. Thankfully, federal investments through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) are producing results:

- Cleanup work is complete in 12 out of 31 U.S. Areas of Concern (AOC)—so-called toxic hot-spots. Under the GLRI, 3 AOCs were delisted and all actions necessary to delist another 8 are finished.
- The number of acres enrolled in Farm Bill conservation programs have more than doubled, which has reduced polluted runoff in the Maumee River (Ohio), Saginaw Bay (Mich.) and Fox River (Wis.) watersheds.
- More than 513 dams and barriers were removed, allowing fish to access more than 5,200 miles of river.

Research shows that investing in cleaning up toxic pollution, controlling invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat, protecting wetlands, and reducing runoff that causes toxic algal outbreaks produces more than 3-to-1 in additional economic benefits across the region. The GLRI is:

- Inspiring new real estate and commercial development, particularly in waterfront areas.
- Boosting water-based, outdoor recreation and increasing tourism across the region.
- Increasing housing options and home values.
- Increasing the number of young people staying in or relocating to Great Lakes communities.

#### RETURN FOR EVERY \$1 SPENT (THROUGH 2036)

Great Lakes Region	\$3.35
Ashtabula, Ohio	\$2.75
Buffalo, N.Y.	\$4.09
Detroit, Mich.	\$4.29
Duluth, Minn.	\$2.80
Erie, Pa.	\$3.43
Muskegon, Mich.	\$3.03
Sheboygan, Wis.	\$2.63
Waukegan, Ill.	\$4.33

Yet serious threats remain:

- Toxic pollution threatens the health of people and wildlife. 19 AOCs need to be cleaned up. In 2021, at least 8 AOC projects will be underway, requiring an estimated \$118 million in GLRI funds (with another \$79 million provided by non-federal partners).
- Toxic algal outbreaks continue to foul drinking water, harm wildlife, hurt small businesses, and incur higher costs for utilities and people.
- Sewage contamination continues to threaten public health.
- Emerging contaminants like toxic PFAS threaten drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife, and outdoor recreation.

### REAUTHORIZE THE GLRI—SUPPORT THE GLRI ACT OF 2019

The GLRI has been an environmental and economic success, but much work remains. Reauthorizing the GLRI is essential to continue this important work, and the region stands ready to continue this federal partnership. We need to ensure that all communities benefit from and enjoy the GLRI investments in restoration.

It's important that federal investments are commensurate with the serious threats facing the lakes and communities. The GLRI Act of 2019 (H.R. 4031 & S. 2295) reauthorizes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, helping meet the on-the-ground needs of communities by incrementally increasing the annual authorization back to its initial level of \$475 million per year by FY2026.

#### ACTIVE LEGISLATION

##### H.R. 4031

- 50 cosponsors
- Passed House (2/5/20)

##### S. 2295

- 14 cosponsors
- Introduced (7/25/19)



# Ensure Safe, Affordable Drinking Water for All

## INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE STATE REVOLVING FUNDS TO \$5.7 BILLION

Drinking water is a basic need, and we should do what it takes to provide it to everyone in the region. Unfortunately, communities across the Great Lakes region are grappling with crumbling drinking water and wastewater infrastructure—a staggering \$188 billion over the next 20 years is needed in improvements, upgrades and repairs.

While federal programs provide much-needed funding to help communities meet their clean water goals, people in the Great Lakes region are being asked to foot a much bigger piece of the bill, leading to huge increases in water bills—often for people who can't afford it. Federal funding for water infrastructure has dropped significantly since 1977. The federal government contributed 63 percent of total spending on water infrastructure then; now, federal investment comprises 9 percent of infrastructure spending. More and more communities can't afford the burden: From 2010 to 2017, water costs increased 41 percent across the country.

To ensure everyone in the region has access to clean, safe, affordable water, Congress must:

- Support the reauthorization of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and fund the Clean Water SRF at no less than \$3.4 billion and the Drinking Water SRF at no less than \$2.3 billion.
- Ensure the affordability of clean water and the equitable investment in and engagement of communities through

## GREAT LAKES WATER AND SEWER PRICES ANNUAL COST

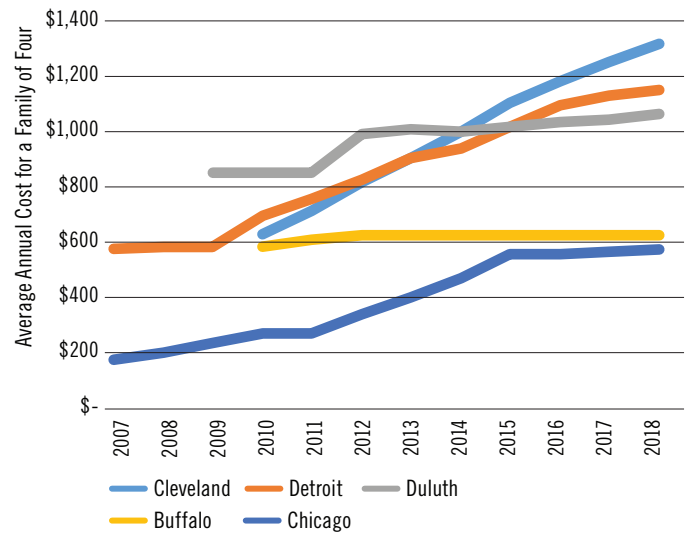


Chart data from American Public Media in collaboration with Great Lakes Today and NPR. "So Close, Yet So Costly: In cities on the Great Lakes, water pipes are crumbling and poor people are paying the price." <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2019/02/07/great-lakes-water-shutoffs>

more grants and flexible financing options, local hiring and training, and utility-sponsored programs and requirements that help families avoid water shut offs.

- Prioritize nature-based stormwater solutions, like rain gardens, wetlands, and permeable pavement that prevent flooding and sewage contamination.
- Oppose weakening environmental protections.

## Oppose Clean Water Rollbacks

### REJECT TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO ROLL BACK CLEAN WATER PROTECTIONS

With many of our cities and towns living with unsafe drinking water, now is not the time to cut back on clean water enforcement. We need more—not less—protections for clean water. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration is rolling back water pollution rules for wetlands and small streams.

We cannot allow pollution from mining and manufacturing and large farms into small waterways without it affecting the rest of the water we all depend on. We all know wetlands flow into streams, which flow into small rivers, into bigger rivers, and into lakes, including our Great Lakes, and ultimately the ocean. The failure of government agencies that



has led to drinking water crises in Flint and the toxic algal outbreak crisis in Toledo make it clear that the government needs to step up its efforts to protect our drinking water, not scale back the rules for big polluters.

# Support Great Lakes Priorities in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2020

## STOP ASIAN CARP

Invasive Asian carp continue to advance closer to Lake Michigan and the rest of the Great Lakes. In 2019, the Army Corps of Engineers completed its Chief's Report for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, a logical choke point to block Asian carp's upstream journey towards Lake Michigan. To stop invasive carp from getting into the Great Lakes, Congress must:

- Authorize the construction of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam plan at full federal expense.

## ENSURE FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES AND NATURE-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE ARE PRIORITIZED

The increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather and flooding events have exposed the need to invest in resilient infrastructure across the region. Prioritizing nature-based infrastructure—rain gardens, wetlands, parks, and pervious pavements—helps communities meet their infrastructure needs while providing substantial co-benefits such as improved fish and wildlife habitat, enhanced recreational opportunities, and improved water quality. Many Great Lakes communities—rural, communities of color, low-income—that are already most at risk from these events are also the same communities where finding resources to deal with these challenges is an issue. To help all communities meet their infrastructure needs, Congress must:

- Encourage natural infrastructure by creating consistency in cost-sharing requirements and allowing natural

infrastructure projects to receive the same cost-share requirements as nonstructural projects.

- Help communities that are disproportionately impacted by giving the Army Corps better tools to offer flexible financing (e.g. cost share waivers) and to consider other project benefits so that every community can prepare for future flooding.



Since 2004, the Healing Our Waters—Great Lakes Coalition has been harnessing the collective power of more than 160 groups representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes. Learn more at [healthylakes.org](http://healthylakes.org). Follow us on Twitter @healthylakes.

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