

2022 Federal Great Lakes Policy Priority: Fund Water Infrastructure and Water Equity

The Alliance for the Great Lakes requests of the Biden administration and Congress:

- The Biden administration should propose \$8.3 billion for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds in its FY 2023 President's Budget, and Congress should appropriate this amount, which is the authorized level of funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 and an increase over current funding.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should issue guidance to states that ensures greater equity in the allocation of funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. Great Lakes states administering State Revolving Funds (SRFs) should be directed to increase funding for disadvantaged communities and meet the goal established in Executive Order 14008 directing that 40 percent of benefits go to disadvantaged communities. The guidance should encourage states to place a funding priority on grants and principal forgiveness to disadvantaged and underserved communities and to make technical assistance available through their SRF programs to disadvantaged communities to design and apply for projects. The goal of these changes is to stop pollution and harm in these communities, with the result being safe drinking water in homes and businesses, less frequent community flooding and basement backups, and fewer sewage overflows that pollute recreational areas.
- Congress should set aside at least 10 percent of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund as grants for green infrastructure projects such as green roofs, permeable pavement, and additional green spaces in cities.
- U.S. EPA's guidance to states on IJA funds should encourage states to make at least 10 percent of Clean Water State Revolving Funds available as grants for green infrastructure projects.
- Congress should enact a federal ban on residential water shutoffs due to nonpayment and requiring reconnection of water service.
- Congress should enact legislation to permanently establish a low-income water assistance program to ensure that every household has access to safe affordable drinking water.

Clean water is a basic need. No one should be without clean, safe, affordable drinking water in their home. No one should have to worry about sewage backing up into their basement or community flooding that damages property. No one should suffer from the harm caused by lead service lines. Yet communities across the Great Lakes region continue to grapple with antiquated drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and adverse effects from lead service lines.

Significantly, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 includes approximately \$50 billion over the next five years for much-needed investments in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure that will be allocated to states through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and other programs.

In 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency allocated an additional \$1.8 billion to the eight Great Lakes States from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 to invest in water infrastructure, including funds to replace lead service lines. While this investment is a good first step to address long-standing deficiencies, we know that more investment is needed, given that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that Great Lakes states need \$188 billion in investment over the next 20 years. While the funding gap has narrowed, it has not been closed, and more investment will be required. Therefore, we continue to request additional funding for water infrastructure, and ask that more of those funds go to low-income communities and communities of color in the form of grants.

BACKGROUND

Great Lakes Infrastructure Needs at a Glance

Great Lakes Region Infrastructure Investment Needs (\$ in billions)

	Wastewater Infrastructure Need over 20 Years	Drinking Water Infrastructure Need over 20 Years	Total Infrastructure Need over 20 Years
Illinois	\$6.537	\$20.910	\$27.447
Indiana	\$7.162	\$7.520	\$14.682
Michigan	\$2.077	\$13.046	\$15.123
Minnesota	\$2.389	\$7.520	\$9.897
New York	\$31.439	\$22.766	\$54.205
Ohio	\$14.587	\$13.405	\$27.992
Pennsylvania	\$6.950	\$16.772	\$23.722
Wisconsin	\$6.329	\$8.569	\$14.898
Total Regional Need	\$77.470	\$110.496	\$187.966

Image credit: Healing our Waters