

Fund Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$450 Million

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

- 💧 The Biden administration should propose at least \$450 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the FY 2025 President's Budget request to Congress, consistent with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Authorization Act.
- 💧 Congress should fund the GLRI for at least \$450 million.
- 💧 Congress should reauthorize the GLRI at a \$500 million level for the next five years (FY 2027-2031).
- 💧 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should use the additional GLRI Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding provided in 2021
- 💧 (approximately \$200 million per year for five years) to accelerate work on delisting Areas of Concern (AOCs) by cleaning up these toxic hotspots.
- 💧 The U.S. EPA should expand the scope of the GLRI program to address environmental injustice and climate change in its next Action Plan IV (2025-2030) and prioritize projects for funding in overburdened communities.
- 💧 U.S. EPA should simultaneously increase GLRI grant funding to communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities to address the disproportionate impacts of environmental harm.

Background: Congress established and funded the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in 2010 to allow the U.S. EPA, working in collaboration with other federal agencies, states, and tribes, to provide grant funds to restore and protect the Great Lakes. The funding addresses on-the-ground restoration projects, including habitat restoration, addressing non-point source pollution, cleaning up legacy pollution and toxic sediments, and actions to prevent the establishment or spread of invasive species. To date, the GLRI has funded more than 7,563 individual projects totaling \$3.7 billion and greatly improving the quality of life in the region. The GLRI also provides major economic benefits, as it is estimated that for every dollar spent, an additional three dollars of value is added to the regional economy.

Although the GLRI has been producing results for communities around the region, in 2020, the Healing Our Waters Coalition (HOW) reviewed the program and found that serious threats remain in communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities. As a result, HOW and its members, including the Alliance, developed a series of recommendations to make the program more equitable by incorporating principles and

goals of environmental justice into the program's strategy and greater community representation and engagement in the program's implementation. This work remains ongoing as EPA is updating its plan for Action Plan IV, which will guide the program investments starting in 2025.

Every GLRI project dollar spent 2010-2016:

- Will produce \$3.35 of additional economic activity through 2036
- Will generate \$1.62 in additional economic activity in tourism-related industries through 2036
- Produced quality of life improvements worth \$1.08 to residents in coastal communities

Great Lakes
RESTORATION

