

The Alliance for the Great Lakes has identified the top five opportunities for Congress and the Trump Administration to address challenges facing the Great Lakes. Federal water programs must be fully funded and prioritize communities where the burden of pollution hits hardest. Community voices must be included in Congressional and agency decision-making.



Water Infrastructure

Increase water infrastructure funding, prioritize funding for communities most in need, and enact national water assistance legislation

Based on EPA survey data, the Great Lakes region needs at least \$290.3 billion over the next twenty years to fix failing water infrastructure. Current federal funding programs are not fully funded and will not meet this need. Congress must provide additional funds for water infrastructure, and it must be structured to reach communities with the highest needs.

In 2025, we urge Congress to:

- Increase annual funding to at least \$9.3 billion for the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds and make some of this funding available as grants or forgivable loans to communities with the greatest needs.
- Set aside at least 20 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.
- Pass a federal ban on water shutoffs.
- Establish a federal program to provide financial assistance for water and sewer bills.

In 2025 we urge the US Environmental Protection Agency to:

- Provide technical assistance to communities most in need to ensure full access to water infrastructure funding.



Great Lakes Restoration

Fund and reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is one of the most important tools in the region's toolbox to protect and restore the lakes and the program will require reauthorization by the end of 2026.

In 2025, we urge Congress to:

- Fund the GLRI with at least \$475 million in FY2026.
- Reauthorize the GLRI program for the next five years (FY 2027-2031).





Agriculture

Pass a Farm Bill that prioritizes clean water

Agriculture is the largest unaddressed source of nonpoint pollution in the Great Lakes region. Runoff from agricultural lands puts the Great Lakes at risk, polluting drinking water, threatening wildlife, and harming the regional economy. In 2025, Congress can pass a Farm Bill that ensures farms produce clean water, not pollution, along with their crops.

In 2025, we urge Congress to pass a Farm Bill that:

- Increases funding for US Department of Agriculture conservation programs.
- Includes provisions to ensure accountability for farm conservation programs aimed at stopping runoff pollution from agricultural lands.
- Targets federal funding for efforts to increase water quality monitoring in priority watersheds.



Plastic Pollution

Pass legislation to stop plastic pollution

Researchers estimate that 22 million pounds of plastic pollution enter the Great Lakes annually. Plastic pollution isn't just an unsightly problem in our waterways. It poses a serious threat to human and wildlife health. Congress has an opportunity to be a leader on reducing plastic pollution.

In 2025, we urge Congress to pass legislation that:

- Makes plastic waste producers responsible for its reduction.
- Reduces the use of single-use plastics, including polystyrene foam.
- Funds additional research on the public health impact of plastics.



Invasive Species

Protect the Great Lakes from aquatic invasive species

Preventing invasive species from entering is the best way to protect the Great Lakes. The battle against invasive species is primarily focused on stopping invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes.

In 2025, we urge Congress to:

- Fund the planning and design for the second phase of construction of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project to stop invasive carp.

In 2025, we urge the Army Corps of Engineers to:

- Continue implementing the first phase of construction for the Brandon Road project in partnership with Illinois and Michigan.

