

Letters to the Editor  
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To the Editor:

Recently, the Chicago Tribune reported that plans for restoring the Great Lakes were “washed up” based on a draft federal report. This is not true. The Great Lakes strategy is not a federal government strategy, but a collaboration of a wide range of participants.

Under the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, established by a Presidential executive order in May 2004, more than 1,500 people have been working together on an unprecedented effort to set out a comprehensive list of prioritized actions to clean up and protect the Great Lakes. They include representatives of states, cities, Congress, the federal executive branch, tribes, private industry and advocacy groups.

The Collaboration released its draft plan on July 7 in Duluth. It calls for \$20.5 billion in federal, state, local, tribal, and private spending to fulfill a series of ambitious, long-term goals and address a wide range of issues from invasive species to sewage discharges and wetland preservation. While this is clearly a significant investment, we must remember that the Great Lakes are one of our nation’s valuable natural resources. We have an added obligation to protect them because we share them with our neighbors in Canada. What we do now for the Great Lakes will save us far larger expenditures in the future.

At a series of six public meetings across the basin from Superior to Buffalo in July and August, nearly 150 people supported the recommendations and urged full funding of the draft plan. The Collaboration received almost 3,000 written comments, almost all of them favorable.

As we move forward together in preparing the final Great Lakes strategy and action plan for release on December 12 in Chicago, it is of the utmost importance that we stay the course. All parties to the Collaboration must make a strong commitment to the necessary actions to protect the Great Lakes if we are to meet our obligations to the people who use and enjoy the lakes, and to all future generations.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Daley  
Mayor, City of Chicago  
Chairman, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative