



Action Plan 2030 to Protect the Great Lakes proposed Leading Great Lakes Advocates make case for 10-year, \$100M/year strategy

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Today, following a nine-month intensive study and consultation process, five leading Great Lakes organisations submitted a 10-year Action Plan to protect the Great Lakes (Action Plan 2030) to Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, and shared it with the Honourable Rod Phillips, Ontario’s Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks. The organisations are calling on the Federal Government to invest \$100 million per year over ten years to implement the plan, that will serve as leverage to secure matching investments from other levels of government and other sources.

“Canada is working with the United States to protect the Great Lakes,” said the Hon. Catherine McKenna, Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, “Together we can find solutions to complex problems facing the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River including fighting climate change. When we restore and protect our fresh water, we not only secure the health of our environment, but also the health, culture and economy of millions of Canadians.”

Action Plan 2030 was prepared under the direction of an Expert Panel co-chaired by two esteemed environmental specialists, Mr. Gord Miller, former Environment Commissioner of Ontario, and M. Jean Cinq-Mars, Québec’s former Sustainable Development Commissioner. Working closely with experts, stakeholders, and indigenous advisors, they studied new approaches to tackle four complex challenges facing the Canadian portion of the Great Lakes – climate change, toxics and other harmful pollutants, nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms, and bacteriological contamination of beaches.

“While progress in protecting the Great Lakes has been made over the years, the combined impacts of climate change, population growth, and intensive farming and industrial activity demands a new approach,” said Expert Panel co-chair Gord Miller, “By targeting sources of pollution having the greatest impact, the Action Plan proposes more strategic and surgical interventions using new kinds of collaboration, technologies and big data.”

The Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes was inspired by the U.S Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a federal program that has delivered over \$2 billion in funding for Great Lakes restoration since 2008 and resulted in a 3:1 return on investment. It is supported by both major political parties in the United States.

“Action Plan 2030 shows us the way forward in Great Lakes protection. Protecting such a vast and valuable ecosystem requires significant and sustained investment like the GLRI on the US side of the Lakes,” said Jean Cinq-Mars, Expert Panel Co-chair. “We need the same kind of multi-partisan leadership and commitment this side of the border.”

The Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes consists of 15 key actions to protect the Great Lakes and those who live in the region. When implemented, these actions would:

- **Protect Great Lakes shoreline communities** and ecosystems that are most vulnerable to high water levels and make them ‘climate resilient’;
- **Reduce our exposure to toxics**, by actively identifying and reducing human and environmental exposure to harmful chemicals in the Great Lakes region, in the air, water, ground and in products;
- **Accelerate phosphorus reduction into our waterways** that cause harmful algal blooms, by targeting areas or properties that contribute the most;
- **Make contaminated beaches clean and safe** by taking action to address sources of sewage and other bacteriological contamination.

“By getting information about our exposure to pollutants in the environment and in products into the hands of communities and individuals, Action Plan 2030 will help us make more informed choices and will drive action to eliminate those sources of pollution,” said Anishinabek Nation Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Edward Wawia, a member of the Expert Panel.

The five organizations, who originally proposed the idea of an Action Plan to Minister McKenna, including the [Great Lakes Fishery Commission](#), the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#), the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#), [Freshwater Future Canada](#), and [Stratégies Saint Laurent](#), are leading advocates for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection, representing diverse perspectives including municipal governments, business and industry, fisheries management, and environmental and conservation interests.

“Mayors and municipal leaders are concerned about the record flooding in many communities, and welcome Action Plan 2030’s recommendations for new approaches and investments,” said Sarah Rang, Deputy Director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

“Home to 1 in 3 Canadians, preserving the health of the Great Lakes is vitally important for protecting public health and the integrity of our natural systems, but also for ensuring our future prosperity as the lakes support a number of key economic sectors and communities in Ontario,” said Mark Fisher, President and CEO of the Council of the Great Lakes Region.

A copy of Action Plan 2030 can be found at www.westbrookpa.com/glsllcollab .

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