



PRESS RELEASE
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Cities Initiative Endorses the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024

This vital legislation will safeguard the world's largest freshwater ecosystem and yield economic dividends for current and future generations across the Great Lakes

Chicago – February 7, 2024 – The Cities Initiative proudly endorses the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Act of 2024, which was introduced in the U.S. Congress this week by the bipartisan leadership of the Great Lakes Task Force. This legislation would authorize the GLRI for an additional five fiscal years and increase its authorized funding level to \$500 million per fiscal year.

The GLRI was established in 2010 to support freshwater protection and restoration efforts across the Great Lakes, including in several Cities Initiative member communities. Since then, the U.S. Congress has provided \$4.54 billion for the GLRI via the annual appropriations process and an additional \$1 billion via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency expects to complete cleanup and restoration activities at 22 of 25 remaining environmentally degraded sites by 2030, ongoing and emerging challenges threaten to undermine this progress, warranting continued federal investments.

The GLRI's benefits have extended far beyond environmental stewardship. A 2018 study by the University of Michigan credited the GLRI with creating thousands of jobs, increasing freshwater tourism and enhancing quality of life for local residents. The study also found that these economic gains extended far into the future, with every GLRI dollar pumped into local economies between 2010 and 2016 generating an estimated \$3.35 in ancillary economic activity through 2036.

"The Cities Initiative applauds the bipartisan leadership of the Great Lakes Task Force for introducing the GLRI Act of 2024 and urges the U.S. Congress to pass it as quickly as possible," said Gino Moretti, Mayor of Saint-Anicet, Québec, and Chair of the Cities Initiative. "If enacted, this vital legislation will maintain an effective program that continues to safeguard the world's largest freshwater ecosystem and yield economic dividends for current and future generations across the Great Lakes."

The bipartisan leadership of the Great Lakes Task Force includes Senator Debbie Stabenow (Michigan); Senator J.D. Vance (Ohio); Rep. David Joyce (OH-14); Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI-06); Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-04) and Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH-09).

About the Cities Initiative

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. It is committed to stewarding the basin's freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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