



## **2024 U.S. Federal Priorities for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Communities**

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The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. federal government to support the following priorities for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin communities. For more information, please contact Travis Wheeler, Chief Policy Officer, at [twheeler@glslcities.org](mailto:twheeler@glslcities.org).

### **Safeguard Equitable Implementation of Federal Investments in Water Infrastructure**

- Supplement Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund with \$3 billion in base appropriations for each program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and explore opportunities to expand direct municipal funding for water-infrastructure projects without undermining the integrity of these programs
- Begin assessing the successes and limitations of the IIJA infusion of funding to State Revolving Funds – including the need to simplify grant application processes – in order to inform the development of new federal grant programs that aid communities still wrestling with the most severe water-infrastructure needs and fiscal constraints
- Continue to offer direct technical assistance to municipalities through Environmental Finance Centers and other federal programs in order to help underserved, low-capacity utilities access public funds for water-infrastructure projects and water-affordability programs

### **Expedite Lead Service Line Replacement and Distribute Federal Funds Fairly**

- Promulgate the final Lead and Copper Rule Improvements – including the ten-year lead service line replacement (LSLR) timeline for most communities – while securing additional federal funding for LSLR beyond the IIJA's \$15 billion down payment
- Amend the Safe Drinking Water Act by waiving the requirement that each state be allotted at least one percent of IIJA LSLR funds, allowing Great Lakes states and communities with the highest lead burdens to receive their fair share of federal support
- Enable formulas for IIJA LSLR allotments from the 7<sup>th</sup> Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment to be linked to revised inventory data submitted by water systems as part of the federal October 2024 Lead and Copper Rule mandate, which would more closely align funding with accurate data and safeguard equitable distribution of IIJA LSLR funds to Great Lakes states and communities

### **Facilitate Economic Transformation in Basin Communities**

- Collaborate with local government to implement the Inflation Reduction Act and enact additional legislation and policies, as necessary, to attract green and blue industries; harness clean, accessible waterfronts as drivers of economic revitalization; implement clean and renewable energy sources and expand sustainable, integrated and water-borne commerce, mobility and tourism – all while protecting the basin's unparalleled freshwater ecosystem
- Name a presidentially-appointed co-chair of the Great Lakes Authority (GLA) and appropriate \$5 million for the GLA in FY25 to foster the creation of an economic and infrastructure development plan for basin-wide economic transformation

- Support a sustainable, robust shipping industry on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, including by fully implementing the Green Shipping Corridor Network Corridor and providing \$55 million for a new Great Lakes icebreaker at least as capable of the USCGC Mackinaw in Procurement, Construction and Improvement funds in FY25 to improve icebreaking capacity and promote shipping

#### **Promote Ecosystem Restoration and Protect Water Quality**

- Provide \$450 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in FY25 and approve the GLRI Act of 2024 to extend the program’s authorization for an additional five fiscal years – at a level of \$500 million annually – and support the continued restoration and revitalization of coastal communities
- Provide full funding for Farm Bill agricultural conservation programs — including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program — that target the Great Lakes as a “critical conservation area” while mitigating harmful algal blooms and protecting water quality
- Ban the production and importation of harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), with limited exceptions for essential uses; require consumer packaging to disclose the use of PFAS compounds; finalize achievable, enforceable limits on PFAS contamination in drinking water; increase federal funding to rapidly deploy treatment technologies for PFAS-contaminated drinking water; designate PFAS as a hazardous substance under the Superfund Program; require industry to contribute towards PFAS clean-up costs; restrict PFAS from being discharged into the environment; invest in research and monitoring and strengthen the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s PFAS Strategic Roadmap and accelerate implementation

#### **Bolster Coastal Resilience and Prevent Urban Flooding**

- Provide full funding to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in FY25 to sustain progress on the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study and ensure federal and state project partners conduct robust, proactive engagement with municipal leaders to directly address the needs of coastal communities
- Ensure the equitable distribution of federal funds under the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program by increasing the baseline noncompetitive allocation to states and removing overly restrictive technical criteria such as International Building and Residential Code standards or by evaluating projects based on their own state and local priorities
- Minimize barriers for municipalities to access funds to protect coastal resources and mitigate damage from erosion, flooding and severe storms under FEMA’s Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program by providing state administrators with clarification on required enabling legislation and Justice40 requirements

#### **Combat Aquatic Invasive Species**

- Authorize a 100 percent federal cost share for operation, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and replacement for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act
- Encourage the State of Illinois and USACE to sign expeditiously the Project Partnership Agreement for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project in order to unlock \$274 million in federal funding for the project’s construction phase and avoid disruption to this vital effort to prevent invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes
- Provide full funding for successful Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) programs, including the Great Lakes and other regional AIS panels and state AIS management plans established under the National Invasive Species Act, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s sea lamprey control program and the Invasive Carp Action Plan

### **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.