



Take Action to Build a Brighter Future for the Great Lakes Region

February 2010



Great Lakes Commission



Healing Our Waters® - Great Lakes Coalition



Great Lakes Fishery Commission



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority



Council of Great Lakes Industries



Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition

Photo: Sunset over magnificent Lake Huron.

Priorities for Great Lakes Restoration and Economic Revitalization

The Great Lakes are a national treasure and a vital economic asset; advancing their restoration will create jobs, stimulate the economy and build a brighter future for our nation and the eight-state Great Lakes region. For FY 2010, President Obama and Congress provided \$475 million in new funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), an unprecedented, multiyear program to restore the largest freshwater resource in the world. The GLRI funds are needed to implement the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's comprehensive cleanup plan, which is broadly endorsed by Great Lakes Governors, states, cities, tribes, conservation groups, business and industry. The GLRI targets science-based solutions to urgent problems facing the Great Lakes, like shutting the door on invasive species; cleaning up toxic sediments; stopping polluted runoff; preventing beach contamination; restoring degraded wetlands; and protecting fish and wildlife resources. In addition to the GLRI, congressional action is needed on several other regional priorities.

We urge Congress to support Great Lakes restoration and economic revitalization by acting on the following priorities, which complement those of the Great Lakes Governors.

- **Maintain or expand funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative:** The President committed to a five-year, \$5 billion program to restore and protect the Great Lakes. The \$475 million for FY 2010 is a strong start. However, sustained, consistent funding is needed to fulfill the President's promise, maintain momentum, build on past investments and ensure the GLRI's success. Congress should devote GLRI funds to our well-defined and broadly endorsed regional restoration plan, not to budget gaps in national programs. The Initiative includes crucial funding to clean up contaminated sediments under the Great Lakes Legacy Act. *Provide at least \$475 million in FY 2011 for implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.*
- **Fix failing sewers and drinking water infrastructure:** The GLRI does not address this critical need. Continued support is needed to end sewer overflows, keep Great Lakes beaches open and safeguard drinking water supplies. *Provide \$2.7 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and \$1.4 billion for the Safe Drinking Water SRF. Additional funding should be included in new job creation legislation.*
- **Close the door on aquatic invasive species:** The imminent threat of Asian carp invading the Great Lakes underscores the urgent need to protect the region against damaging aquatic invasive species (AIS). *Increase funding for actions to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, including early detection and rapid response capabilities, completing all needed barriers on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and longer term planning for separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds. Extend the Corps of Engineers' authority to take necessary actions to prevent further movement of carp toward Lake Michigan. Implement effective federal ballast discharge regulations and support the sea lamprey program and other successful control efforts. Enact legislation to prevent AIS introductions from the trade in live organisms.*
- **Strengthen science-based conservation efforts and enhance regional coordination, collaboration, and accountability in the Great Lakes:** Action is needed to ensure the GLRI stays focused on the right priorities. Congress should formally authorize the GLRI to strengthen accountability, provide transparency, boost coordination with stakeholders, and ensure a strong scientific foundation for Great Lakes restoration efforts. *Reauthorize EPA's Great Lakes Program and authorize the GLRI to permanently establish and strengthen our region's ecosystem restoration efforts.*

The Great Lakes region is united in asking Congress to support these priorities.