

UPCOMING EVENTS

**12th Annual Great Lakes
Restoration Conference
hosted by the Healing
Our Waters® – Great
Lakes Coalition
Sandusky, Ohio**
September 20 – 22, 2016
[Details](#)

**Great Lakes Commission
2016 Annual Meeting
Toronto, Ontario**
October 6 – 7, 2016
[Details](#)

**Great Lakes Observing
System Annual Meeting
Ann Arbor, MI**
October 12, 2016
[Details](#)

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JULY 2016



NOAA Releases Lake Erie HAB Forecast

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its official forecast for the upcoming Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) season in Western Lake Erie. NOAA is predicting Lake Erie will experience a less severe bloom than the record-setting one experienced last year during the HAB season. One of the major factors in NOAA's estimates is less discharge from the Maumee River and a return to an average nutrient runoff into Lake Erie. However, NOAA predicts that the 2016 bloom could measure 5.5 on the severity index and could range anywhere between 3.0 and 7.0. A HAB above 5.0 on the severity index indicates a bloom of concern, so while the prediction for a smaller bloom than last year may seem like good news, Great Lakes stakeholders and environmental organizations are still very concerned about the upcoming HAB season. A group of environmental and conservation groups have provided both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Environment and Climate Change Canada with [recommendations](#) calling on each state and province along Lake Erie's shoreline to develop a plan that addresses comprehensive monitoring programs. NOAA will continue to provide real-time information through its bi-weekly HAB bulletin that the public can subscribe to by email [here](#).

GLFWRA Introduced in U.S. House of Representatives

U.S. Representatives Debbie Dingell (MI-12), Candice Miller (MI-10), and Darin LaHood (IL-18) introduced the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2016 (GLFWRA), a bipartisan bill supporting fish and wildlife restoration in the Great Lakes.

[H.R. 5765](#) authorizes \$6 million annually through 2021 to implement restoration projects and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service activities related to the Great Lakes region, and would require a 25% non

-federal match of total project cost. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Earlier this summer, U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (MN), Rob Portman (OH), Debbie Stabenow (MI), and Mark Kirk (IL) introduced companion legislation in the Senate ([S. 2949](#)), which has been referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Organizations that have supported GLFWRA include:

Ducks Unlimited; the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; the American Sportfishing Association; the Alliance for the Great Lakes; Trout Unlimited; the Western Reserve Land Conservancy; Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever; and the Ohio Conservation Federation. A more detailed summary of the legislation can be viewed [here](#).

Legislative Updates



Senate Passes Coastal Resiliency Bill

Before recessing for its summer break, the Senate passed the Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act ([S. 1935](#)) by voice vote. The bill, which was introduced by Senate Great Lakes Task Force member Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI), and cosponsored by Great Lakes Task Force member Sen. Gary Peters (MI), seeks to increase efforts to revitalize waterfront communities in the Great Lakes and nationwide. Among other things, the bill creates a voluntary Resilient Waterfront

Community designation within the Department of Commerce and establishes a Resilient Waterfront Communities network aimed at providing coastal communities resources and best practices to help invite new investment opportunities in coastal communities. Various Great Lakes stakeholder groups support the legislation including the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and the Healing Our Waters Coalition. A full list of regional supporters can be viewed [here](#).

U.S. House Passes the FY2017 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill

The House passed the FY2017 Interior and Environment Appropriations Act ([H.R. 5538](#)) by a vote of 231-196 on July 14. The bill is the annual appropriations act that funds both the Department of Interior and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Out of the overall \$32.1 billion in funding provided by the bill, the EPA would get roughly \$8 billion, which is \$164 million below the current FY2016 funding levels and \$400 million below the Administration's request. The bill also contains legislative riders that would bar funding for some of the President's key environmental priorities such as the Clean Power Plan and Clean Water Rule. President Obama has said he would veto the House passed bill in its current form.

<u>Program</u>	<u>FY2017 \$ Amount</u>	<u>Change From Current Funding Level</u>
<i>The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative</i>	\$300 million	Level
<i>Superfund</i>	\$1.1 billion	+\$33.2 million
<i>Environmental Programs and Management</i>	\$2.5 billion	-\$92.3 million
<i>Leaking Underground Storage Tanks</i>	\$94.6 million	+\$2.7 million
<i>USFWS Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation</i>	\$75 million	Level
<i>Inland Oil Spills</i>	\$18.2 million	-\$100,000
<i>Water Pollution Control (Sec. 106) Grants</i>	\$230.8 million	Level
<i>Land and Water Conservation Fund</i>	\$322 million	-\$128 million
<i>State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)</i>	\$3.4 billion	-\$147.4 million
<i>Within STAG:</i>		
<i>Clean Water State Revolving Fund</i>	\$1 billion	-\$394 million
<i>Drinking Water State Revolving Fund</i>	\$1.071 billion	+208 million
<i>Brownfield Projects Grants</i>	\$80 million	Level
<i>Brownfield Categorical Grants (Sec. 128)</i>	\$47.7 million	Level

Approved Amendments of Interest

Rep. Brian Higgins (NY) - Prohibits the use of funds by a State in contravention of the Great Lakes Compact, an interstate compact ratified by Congress detailing how the States will work together to manage and protect the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin.

Rep. Dan Kildee (MI) - Provides funding to help provide fresh drinking water to communities that have been impacted by lead in their drinking water.

Rep. Dan Kildee (MI) - Allows states with communities that have declared an emergency related to lead in drinking water to use more of their Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to address lead in drinking water public health issues.

Congressional Appropriations

Before departing for the summer recess, the House passed the FY2017 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill and the Senate passed the FY2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill and the FY2017 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. When Congress returns to Washington in September, it will likely look to pass a continuing resolution to keep the federal government funded past September 30th, the last day of the fiscal year. It remains likely that Congress will turn to another year-end omnibus appropriations act to finish up its FY2017 appropriations work.

Energy and Water

This bill provides the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding for all dredging, harbor maintenance, and flood prevention projects and the Department of Energy's renewable energy programs.

House— Approved by Committee 5/24, but failed on the House floor 5/26 by a vote of 112—305. The NEMWI fact sheet about funding for programs relevant to the region can be found [here](#).

Senate—Passed Senate 5/19. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Interior and Environment

This bill provides funding for critical environmental programs including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$300 million for the FY2017. The bill also provides critical funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and other major environmental programs that are essential to the Great Lakes.

House— Passed House 7/14. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Senate—Approved by Committee 6/16. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Commerce and Justice and Science

This bill provides the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with funding to focus on such issues as coastal management and its continued work on Harmful Algal Blooms.

House—Approved by Committee 5/24. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Senate—Approved by Committee 5/26. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Transportation and Housing and Urban Affairs

This bill provides the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation with its annual funding levels and also funds the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), which oversees critical pipeline infrastructure safety that is of great concern in the Great Lakes region.

House—Approved by Committee 5/24. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Senate—Passed Senate 5/12. The NEMWI fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Great Lakes Note

Waukesha Water Diversion Application Approved by Great Lakes Governors

The eight Great Lakes Governors unanimously voted last Tuesday to approve an application by Waukesha, WI to divert 8.2 million gallons of water a day from Lake Michigan. The diversion is subject to certain conditions required by the Compact Council. This is the first water approval outside the Great Lakes basin since the Great Lakes Compact was approved in 2008. The final decision by the Compact Council can be viewed [here](#).

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body (Regional Body) will hold its regular meeting on Monday, July 25, 2016, at 2 PM via conference call and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council (Compact Council) will hold their regular meeting at 2:30 PM that same day via conference call. Both meetings will be open for public comment. Details about the Regional Body's meeting can be viewed [here](#), and details about the Compact Council's meeting can be viewed [here](#).



The Great Lakes Washington Program advances Great Lakes Protection and Restoration objectives by creating a strong interface between activities of Great Lakes leadership in the region and federal leaders in Washington – particularly Great Lakes Congressional delegation members.

The program supports the goals of the Northeast-Midwest Institute, a Washington-based nonprofit and nonpartisan research, education, and policy organization dedicated to economic vitality, environmental quality, and regional equity for Northeast and Midwest states.

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Strengthening the Region that Sustains the Nation