

Great Lakes Provisions in Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Bills

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In March of 2024, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, two packages of appropriations bills. Many provisions impacting the Great Lakes were included in the spending packages. The Northeast-Midwest Institute (NEMWI) has provided this summary highlighting some of the key appropriations bills and accounts pertaining to the Great Lakes.

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

| Program | FY 24 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 23 Funding | Notes |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| NOAA’s Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes | \$39.5 million | \$40.5 million | \$39.5 million | This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL). |
| Coastal Zone Management Grants | \$81.5 million | \$78.5 million | \$81.5 million | |
| National Sea Grant College Program | \$80 million | \$80.7 million | \$80 million | |
| Sea Grant Aquaculture Research | \$14 million | \$14.1 million | \$14 million | |
| IOOS Regional Observations | \$42.5 million | \$42.5 million | \$42.5 million | This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) |
| Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas | \$67 million | \$87.1 million | \$68 million | |

Additional Items of Interest

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The agreement includes at least \$14 million for HABs research, equal to FY23 levels, including within the Great Lakes ecosystem. While a specific number for HABs wasn’t given in the budget request, there were funds requested under NOAA’s Competitive Research account to be partially directed to HABs. That structure is reflected in the agreement. Additionally, the agreement directs NOAA to submit a report summarizing HABs data in large freshwater bodies, “due to concern with duplication, incompatibility, and separation of data related to the causes and effects of HABs.” The agreement

encourages NOAA to work towards a system to centralize and synthesize this data. Also, \$3.5 million is provided to the National Harmful Algal Bloom Observing Network.

The agreement includes the following HABs language: “Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs}.- The agreement supports the work of the [National Science Foundation’s] Oceans and Human Health program to support research into the human health impacts of HABs in marine coastal regions, the Great Lakes Basin, and freshwater systems. The agreement further encourages research to better understand how the influx of nutrients, including dissolved nitrogen and phosphorous, contribute to HAB outbreaks.”

National Institute of Science and Technology Community Project Funding

963,000 is directed to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for equipment upgrades for its PFAS Center of Excellence Analytical Laboratory, as requested by Rep. Mark Pocan.

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chicago Area Waterways System Restoration, IL | N/A | N/A | 200,000 | Requested by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) |
| Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL | \$14.33 million | \$14.33 million | \$13.75 million | |
| Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI | N/A | \$235 million | \$257.4 million | |
| Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study | \$3 million | \$3 million | \$3 million | |
| Great Lakes Authority | N/A | \$5 million | \$5 million | |

Additional Items of Interest:

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

The agreement provides the Corps with \$200,000, equal to the budget request, for interbasin control of Great Lakes-Mississippi River aquatic nuisance species.

The agreement makes reference to Section 509 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020, which established a pilot program to control invasive carp in the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. It expresses that Congress “is frustrated with the

lack of progress,” reiterates Congressional direction, and directs the Corps to finalize the program in FY24. The agreement expresses support for this project and other “efforts to prevent invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes.”

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The agreement contains the following language on, and funding for, harmful algal bloom programs: “The agreement provides \$5,000,000 to supplement activities related to harmful algal bloom research and control, consistent with House direction; \$3,500,000 to develop next generation ecological models, consistent with House and Senate direction; \$5,000,000 to continue work on the Harmful Algal Bloom Demonstration Program, as authorized by WRDA of 2020; and \$4,000,000 to work with university partners, consistent with Senate direction.”

Regional Sediment Management.

The agreement provides \$2.6 million, up from \$600,000 in FY23, for cooperation and coordination with the Great Lakes states to develop sediment transport models for Great Lakes tributaries that discharge to federal navigation channels.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) | \$368 million | \$368.1 million | \$368 million | The agreement also includes \$16.5 million for the GLRI Distinct Tribal Program |
| BEACH Grants | \$10.62 million | \$9.81 million | \$9.75 million | |
| Clean Water State Revolving Fund | \$1.639 billion | \$1.639 billion | \$1.639 billion | The agreement directs \$787.7 million of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants for constructing waste-water and storm-water infrastructure and water quality protection. |
| Drinking Water State Revolving Fund | \$1.126 billion | \$1.126 billion | \$1.126 billion | The agreement directs \$631.7 million of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants for the construction of drinking water |

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| | | | | infrastructure and water quality protection. |
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Department of Interior

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| USFWS Invasive Carp Programs | \$31 million | N/A | \$31 million | The agreement includes \$4 million for contract fishing and \$27 million for all other invasive carp activities. |
| Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration program | \$3 million | N/A | \$3 million | |
| Great Lakes Sea Lamprey | \$1.01 million | N/A | \$1.01 million | USFWS budget justification includes \$48.37 million for aquatic invasive species control, an increase of \$7.2 million from FY 2022. |
| USGS Great Lakes Science Center | \$15 million | N/A | \$15 million | |
| USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program | \$44.56 million | \$42.34 million | \$43.5 million | This USGS account includes the Great Lakes Mapping Coalition |
| USGS Invasive Carp Research | \$11 million | N/A | \$11 million | \$3 million of this total must be used for research on Grass Carp |

Additional Items of Interest

EPA

Great Lakes Consent Decree

The agreement includes \$1 million for the Great Lakes Consent Decree at EPA.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The agreement provides \$6 million to investigate adverse health effects from exposure to HABs and cyanobacteria toxins and to develop methods to monitor, predict, and characterize blooms to allow for early action and management.

Lake Champlain

The agreement includes \$818,000 for The Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Program. Also, it includes \$25 million to the Lake Champlain Program, to be used in part on projects that will reduce phosphorus loading to make progress towards meeting the 2016 TMDL.

Other relevant EPA grant programs

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 23 Request | FY 24 Funding |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)) | \$25.01 million | \$182 million | \$22 million |
| Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability (STAG) | \$7 million | \$25 million | \$6.5 million |
| Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works (STAG) | \$27 million | \$18 million | \$25.5 million |
| Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants (STAG) | \$50 million | \$280 million | \$41 million |
| Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment (STAG) | \$6 million | \$17.71 million | \$5.4 million |
| Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319) (Categorical Grants) | \$182 million | \$189 million | \$174 million |
| Pollution Control (Sec. 106) (Categorical Grants) | \$237 million | \$279.4 million | \$225.7 million |
| Public water system supervision (Categorical Grants) | \$121.5 million | \$132.57 million | \$116 million |

WIFIA

The agreement provides \$72.27 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program, down from \$75.64 million in FY23.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency

National Invasive Species Act (NISA)

The agreement includes \$2.83 million for NISA State Plans and \$1.57 million for NISA implementation, which helps control the spread of invasive carp.

Quagga and Zebra Mussels

The agreement includes \$3.5 million to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) Research (Environmental Health Program)

The agreement includes \$4.75 million, equal to FY23 levels, for research on harmful algal blooms.

PFAS (Environmental Health Program)

The agreement includes \$2.7 million, equal to FY23 levels for research on the transmission of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFOA/PFAS) in watersheds and aquifers.

National Water Quality Program

The agreement includes \$96 million for the National Water Quality program (down from \$100 million in FY23) and \$7.49 million for harmful algal bloom research (maintained at FY23 levels).

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) | \$50 million | \$38.1 million | \$50 million | The agreement includes the following breakdown of GLFC funding: \$10 million for Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog basins. \$1 million for grass carp activities. \$500,000 for Lake Memphremagog's fishery |
| International Joint Commission (IJC) | \$10.88 million | \$11.09 million | \$10.88 million | |

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|---|------------------|----------------|-------------------|--|
| Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS) | \$38.5 million | \$38.5 million | \$40.29 million | The agreement directs that at least \$16.3 million (up from \$14.8 million in FY23) be provided for the seaway infrastructure program. The agreement provides \$1 million for trade and economic development activities at the GLS, to be carried out with system stakeholders. |
| MARAD's Port Infrastructure Development Program | \$212.20 million | \$230 million | \$120.460 million | Of the total, the agreement provides \$70.46 million for Community Project Funding. |

Homeland Security

| Program | FY 23 Funding | FY 24 Request | FY 24 Funding | Notes |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
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| Great Lakes heavy icebreaker | N/A | \$55 million | \$20 million | |
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