

Great Lakes Provisions in the FY 2025 Senate Appropriations Bills

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On August 1st, the Senate Committee on Appropriations advanced four more appropriations bills, bringing their total to 11 for the 2025 cycle, and leaving only the Homeland Security appropriations bill yet to go. Unlike in the House, the Senate bills passed on overwhelmingly bipartisan votes. The full Senate has not yet passed any of the appropriations bills.

The bills would increase EPA funding by less than one percent, and would increase NOAA funding by six percent. They include \$371 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, modest increases in funding for many Great Lakes NOAA programs, and significantly increased funding for the Port Infrastructure Development Program.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute prepared this Great Lakes summary based on the committee reports of the bills, and will update it as the Committee passes more legislation.

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Budget Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill	Notes
NOAA’s Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes	\$39.5 million	\$37.2 million	\$39.5 million	\$41 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL).
Coastal Zone Management Grants	\$81.5 million	\$81.5 million	\$80 million	\$83 million	
National Sea Grant College Program	\$80 million	\$72.4 million	\$80 million	\$82 million	
Sea Grant Aquaculture Research	\$14 million	\$0	\$14 million	\$14 million	
IOOS Regional Observations	\$42.5 million	\$10 million	\$56 million	\$43.5 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)
Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas	\$67 million	\$86.1 million	\$40 million	\$68 million	

Additional Items of Interest

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The bill includes \$14 million for harmful algal bloom research within NOAA's Coastal Science and Assessment Competitive Research Account. Within this amount, \$2 million must be used for monitoring and detection research in freshwater systems.

Center of Excellence

The bill provides \$10 million for NOAA Center of Excellence for Operational Ocean and Great Lakes Mapping, equal to FY 24 levels. The President's Budget proposed to eliminate the Center.

Investments in the Great Lakes Report

The Committee requests a report that "details the agency's recent investments in the Great Lakes, a strategic plan to increase stakeholder engagement, and proposals regarding future conservation and restoration to ensure sustainable management of this vital freshwater resource."

Environmental DNA

The Committee endorses the use of eDNA to monitor fisheries and invasive species, and "directs NOAA to work with university partners to expand the eDNA program including designing and implementing an eDNA-based monitoring program."

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL	\$14.33 million	\$13.75 million	\$17.98 million	\$17.98 million	\$17.98 million*
Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI	N/A	\$257.4 million	\$264.13 million	\$326.83 million	\$450.3 million
Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million**
Great Lakes Authority	N/A	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million

*Report language: "No funds recommended in this act may be used for construction of hydrologic separation measures," which would separate the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River Basin

**The bill “requires the Chicago Shoreline to be a focus area of the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study.”

Additional Items of Interest:

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

The bill would provide the Corps with \$200,000, equal to the budget request, the House bill, and the FY 24 enacted level, for interbasin control of Great Lakes-Mississippi River aquatic nuisance species.

Invasive Carp: The bill “looks forward to continued progress” on the Tennessee River and Cumberland River invasive carp demonstration projects. The bill directs the Corps to prioritize invasive species projects, and provide quarterly updates on Brandon Road, the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and other invasive carp prevention and control measures. Finally, the bill directs the Corps to continue their work with the Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ICRCC), especially with regard to managing the spread of invasive species on ships through the Brandon Lock and Dam.

Brandon Road: The bill expresses concern about the “lack of progress,” and “lack of timely communication” from the Corps on Brandon Road.

Advanced Measures

The Corps is encouraged to fully use the authorities granted to it under the Advanced Measures program to mitigate the impacts of high water levels in the Great Lakes Basin.

Great Lakes Navigation System (GLNS)

The bill refers to the GLNS as “the backbone of our Nation’s manufacturing, industrial, building, and agricultural economies,” and “strongly encourages the continued investment in this critical water system.”

Regional Sediment Management: The bill would provide funding “to develop sediment transport models for Great Lakes tributaries.”

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The bill directs \$3.7 million from the Aquatic Nuisance Control Research account to “supplement and advance Corps activities to address Harmful Algal Blooms.” Additionally, the bill would provide \$5 million to “develop next generation ecological models,” and another \$5 million “to work with university partners to develop prediction, avoidance, and remediation measures focused on environmental triggers in riverine ecosystems.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Budget Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill	Notes
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$317 million	The bill also sets the GLRI Distinct Tribal Program at 5% of total GLRI funding, which would fund the program at \$18.55 million, an increase from \$16 million in FY 24.
BEACH Grants (Categorical Grants)	\$9.75 million	\$9.81 million	\$9.75 million	\$9.75	
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.639 billion	\$1.239 billion	1.203 billion	\$1.639 billion	The bill would direct \$362.5 million (down from the FY 24 level of \$787.7 million) of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants.
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.126 billion	\$1.126 billion	\$883.5 million	\$1.126 billion	The bill would direct \$242.4 million (down from the FY 24 enacted level of \$631.7 million) of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants.

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill	Notes
USFWS Invasive Carp Programs	\$31 million	\$21 million	\$26 million	\$31 million	
Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration program	\$3 million	N/A	\$3 million	\$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	\$0	\$15 million	\$15 million	
USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program	\$43.5 million	\$46.32 million	\$43.5 million		This USGS account includes the Great Lakes Mapping Coalition
USGS Invasive Carp Research	\$11 million	\$10.6 million	\$11 million	\$11 million	\$3 million of this total is to be used for research on Grass Carp

Additional Items of Interest

EPA

Lake Champlain

The bill includes \$818,000 for The Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Program. Also, it includes \$25 million to the Lake Champlain Program, to be used on phosphorus pollution, among other issues. Both totals are equal to FY 24 enacted levels.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The Committee is “encouraged by the [Environmental Protection] Agency’s commitment to accelerate the clean-up of Areas of Concern,” and advocates for community involvement in cleanup efforts. The Committee requests a brief on “how communities most impacted by Areas of Concern are represented in decision-making

processes, steps to enhance community engagement and local capacity building, and the Agency’s plan for engaging the Great Lakes community in the development of Action Plan IV.”

Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program

The Committee “appreciates” research into the transport of invasive species in ballast water, and directs the EPA to use funds to “build on these efforts to reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species into the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.”

Research Vessels

As the R/V Lake Explorer II nears the end of its life, the Committee “encourages current funding be used to ensure continuity of the Agency’s water quality and biological monitoring of the Great Lakes, including by replacing the vessel.”

Other relevant EPA grant programs

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG))	\$22 million	\$64.48 million	\$22 million	\$22 million
Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability (STAG)	\$6.5 million	\$25 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.5 million
Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works (STAG)	\$25.5 million	\$18 million	\$25.5 million	\$27.5 million
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants (STAG)	\$41 million	\$50 million	\$41 million	\$41 million
Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment (STAG)	\$5.4 million	\$6 million	\$5 million	\$5.4 million
Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319) (Categorical Grants)	\$174.5 million	\$189 million	\$174.5 million	\$175.5 million
Pollution Control (Sec. 106) (Categorical Grants)	\$225.7 million	\$288.7 million	\$225.7 million	\$225.7 million

Public water system supervision (Categorical Grants)	\$116 million	\$132.6 million	\$116 million	\$117 million
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WIFIA

The bill provides \$72.38 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program, a slight increase from FY 24 levels, but down from \$75.64 million in FY 23.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency

Quagga and Zebra Mussels

The bill includes \$3.5 million, equal to FY 24 enacted levels, to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels.

Invasive Carp

The Committee asks the USFWS to consider “creating a dedicated funding source to increase the intensity and geographic scope” of carp prevention and control efforts, and that carp removal should be the “focus” of those efforts. “While the Committee recognizes the importance of studying and understanding invasive carp patterns, the Service is encouraged to take action on a strategy that increases the focus on biomass removal,” the report says.

The bill also includes \$4.4 million for State Aquatic Nuisance Species management plans for the control of invasive carp.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

PFAS (Environmental Health Program)

The bill maintains funding at \$2.7 million for this account. The Committee also “recommends \$1,000,000 to expand existing research into regulated contaminants present in Tribal lands and ceded territories, as well as traditionally grown and consumed plants and animals, in response to finalized water quality standards.”

National Water Quality Program

The bill includes \$97.7 million for the National Water Quality program (up from \$96 million in FY 24).

PFAS

The bill includes \$8 million for PFAS research that supports farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

STAG Community Project Funding

At the request of Senators Stabenow and Peters, a total of \$3 million is directed to the Great Lakes Water Authority; \$1 million for Freud & Connors Creek Pump Station Rehabilitation, and \$2 million for Intercommunity Relief Sewer Modification

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill	Notes
Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC)	\$50 million	\$39.5 million	\$50 million	\$50 million	Of the \$50 million, \$500,000 must be used to address grass carp, down from \$1 million in FY 24 and in the House bill. The amount also includes \$10 million for the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog basins, and \$1,000,000 for the Lake Memphremagog fishery, equal to FY 24 levels.
International Joint Commission (IJC)	\$10.88 million	\$11.9 million	\$11.9 million	\$10.88 million	The bill also “provides authority for up to \$1,250,000 for the IJC to remain available until September 30, 2026,” and includes \$500,000 for transboundary watershed management.

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	FY 25 Senate Bill	Notes
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)	\$40.29 million	\$40.6 million	\$40.6 million	\$40.6 million	The bill directs that at least \$16.3 million (equal to FY24, and slightly less than the \$16.4 in the House bill) be provided for the seaway infrastructure program.
MARAD's Port Infrastructure Development Program	\$120.46 million*	\$80 million	\$72.4 million*	\$200 million*	Unlike the House bill and previous appropriations, the Senate bill does not provide Community Project Funding. That funding totaled \$70.46 million in FY 24.

*The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law appropriated \$450 million for the PIDP per year from FY 2022 – FY 2026, so if the funding level in the Senate bill was enacted, total appropriations for the program would rise from \$570.46 million in FY 24 to \$650 million in FY 25.

The report includes the following language on port funding inequities: “The Committee directs MARAD to set aside 25 percent of the funds for small inland river and coastal ports and terminals, as required by 46 U.S.C. 54301. The recommendation directs MARAD to allow Federal cost shares above 80 percent for projects in rural areas, as permitted by 46 U.S.C. 54301.”

This goes further than the House report, which addressed this issue, but did not include a set-aside. The House Committee “encourages the Secretary to also consider geographic diversity in its award of PIDP awards at the state and national levels.”

