

Great Lakes Provisions in the FY 2026 Senate Appropriations Bills

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September 10th, 2025



The Senate Appropriations Committee has now passed six of the twelve Appropriations bills, including three covered in this report. The Commerce, Justice, and Science bill would fund NOAA at \$6.1 billion, a reduction from FY24 levels of \$6.7 billion, but an increase over the President's Budget request of just \$4.5 billion. NOAA's National Ocean Service would be funded at \$673 million, a slight increase over FY24 levels, and vastly more than the \$434 million requested in the President's Budget. NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, which the President's Budget would have eliminated, would be funded at \$657 million, \$1 million above FY24 levels.

The Interior-Environment bill would fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$368 million, the same as its FY 24 appropriation. The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds would also be funded at FY 24 levels, and categorical grants that would have been eliminated under the President's Budget are restored in the Senate bill. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill would fund the Port Infrastructure Program at \$96.5 million, below FY 24 levels and below the \$123.5 million in the House bill.

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

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 26 Budget Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 26 Senate Bill	Notes
NOAA's Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes	\$39.5 million	\$0	\$40 million	\$39.5 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL).
Coastal Zone Management Grants	\$81.5 million	\$0	\$81.5 million	\$81.5 million	
National Sea Grant College Program	\$80 million	\$0	\$80 million	\$80 million	
Sea Grant Aquaculture Research	\$14 million	\$0	\$14 million	\$14 million	
IOOS Regional Observations	\$42.5 million	\$0	\$56 million	\$43.5 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)
Sanctuaries and Marine	\$67 million	\$40 million	\$67 million	\$68 million	

Protected Areas					
Harmful Algal Blooms (Competitive Research)	\$14 million	\$0	See note*	\$14 million	The total Competitive Research account, which the President's Budget would have eliminated, would be funded at \$20 million, as in FY24. Within this amount, \$2 million must be used for monitoring and detection research in freshwater systems.
Regional Climate and Data Information	\$47.9 million	\$0	\$47.9 million	\$47.9 million	This NOAA account includes funding for GLISA

*The House bill provides \$20 million for the Competitive Research account, identical to the Senate number. It is reasonable to assume that this includes \$14 million for HABs, but it is not explicitly delineated in the committee report as it is in the Senate version.

Center of Excellence

The bill provides \$10 million for NOAA Center of Excellence for Operational Ocean and Great Lakes Mapping, equal to FY24 levels. The President's Budget proposed to eliminate the Center.

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."

PFAS in Fish

The Committee "is concerned about the concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] detected in fish tissue," and calls for the National Marine Fisheries Service to "evaluate the impacts on aquatic health."

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 26 Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 26 Senate Bill	Notes
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$368 million	The bill also sets the GLRI Distinct Tribal Program at 5% of the total for GLRI, which would fund the DTP at \$18.4 million, up from \$16 million in FY 24.
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.639 billion	\$155 million	1.208 billion	\$1.639 billion	The bill would direct \$349.7 million (down from \$787.7 million in FY 24) of this funding to Congressionally Directed Spending grants.
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.126 billion	\$150 million	\$894.7 million	\$1.126 billion	The bill would direct \$247.6 million (down from \$631.7 million in FY 24) of this funding to Congressionally Directed Spending grants.
WIFIA	\$72.27 million	\$8 million	\$72.27 million	\$64.5 million	

State and Tribal Assistance Grants

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 26 Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 26 Senate Bill
<i>Infrastructure Assistance Grants</i>					
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water	\$25.01 million	\$22 million	\$20 million	\$22 million	\$32 million
Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability	\$7 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.5 million
Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works	\$27 million	\$25.5 million	\$10 million	\$26 million	\$25.5 million
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants	\$50 million	\$41 million	\$41 million	\$44 million	\$39 million
Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment	\$6 million	\$5.4 million	\$6 million	\$5 million	\$5.4 million
Brownfields Projects	\$98 million	\$98 million	\$80 million	\$84.7 million	\$98 million

<i>Categorical Grants</i>					
BEACH Grants	\$10.62 million	\$9.75 million	\$0	\$9.8 million	\$9.75 million
Brownfields Protection	\$47.2 million	\$46.25 million	\$0	\$42.25 million	\$46.25 million
Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319)	\$182 million	\$174.5 million	\$0	\$174.5 million	\$174.5 million
Pollution Control (Sec. 106)	\$237 million	\$225.7 million	\$0	\$225.7 million	\$225.7 million
Public water system supervision	\$121.5 million	\$116 million	\$0	\$115 million	\$116 million

Additional Items of Interest

Lake Champlain

The bill includes \$25 million to the Lake Champlain Program, equal to FY 24 enacted levels, to be used on phosphorus pollution, among other issues.

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 implementation 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.”

PFAS CERCLA Designation

The report expresses the Committee’s concern about PFAS and support for the EPA’s designation of PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under CERCLA as well as the establishment of drinking water standards. The Committee requests a briefing on the Trump EPA’s actions on PFAS “immediately following the enactment of this act.”

Office of Research and Development

“The Committee is appalled that the Agency has announced the imminent closure of ORD, which would result in the further loss of biologists, chemists, engineers, ecologists, and other expert scientists numbering in the thousands and the closure of world-class laboratories and research centers. The Agency has touted savings of \$748,800,000 in direct Federal spending, but fails to acknowledge the immeasurable risk to our health and environment that would come from undermining EPA’s ability to clean up hazardous chemicals, respond to disasters, and support states and Tribal Nations with sound, actionable science.

“The Committee notes that the Agency did not include a proposal to close ORD in the fiscal year 2026 budget request nor amended the budget request to that end nor did the Agency submit the reorganization to the Committee as required by the reprogramming guidance pursuant to section 422 of Public Law 118–42 and continued under the terms and conditions of Public Law 119–4.

“The Committee directs the Agency to immediately halt all actions related to the closure, reduction, reorganization, or other similar such changes to ORD and the EPA scientific workforce and instead, if the administration continues to wish to pursue this change, include any such changes within the President’s budget request for fiscal year 2027 as a proposal for the Committee to make a decision on in a final funding bill for that year.”

Department of Interior

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 26 House Bill	FY 26 Senate Bill
<i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>			
Invasive Carp Programs	\$31 million	\$22 million	\$28 million
Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration program	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million
Great Lakes Sea Lamprey	\$1.01 million	\$1.01 million	N/S
Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey	\$818,000	\$818,000	\$818,000
<i>U.S. Geological Survey</i>			
Great Lakes Science Center	\$15 million	\$15 million	\$15 million
National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program**	\$43.5 million	\$43.5 million	\$43.5 million
Invasive Carp Research	\$11 million	\$11 million	\$11 million

*Neither the USFWS nor the USGS had publicly released a budget justification at the time of publication, so the amounts requested by President's Budget for the above accounts are not known. If those documents are released, NEMWI will update this report with those numbers.

**This USGS account includes the Great Lakes Mapping Coalition.

Additional Items of Interest

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 \$3.3 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 \$96 million for the National Water Quality program, equal to FY24 levels.

PFAS

The bill includes \$7 million for PFAS research that supports farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 26 Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 26 Senate Bill	Notes
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)	\$40.29 million	\$41 million	\$38.1 million	\$40.6 million	The bill directs that at least \$15.9 million (equal to the House bill, and slightly less than the \$16.3 in FY 24) be provided for the seaway infrastructure program.
MARAD's Port Infrastructure Development Program	\$120.46 million*	\$550 million*	\$123.5 million*	\$96.482 million	The bill provides \$21.48 million for Community Project Funding, down from \$70.46 million in FY 24 and \$43.5 million in the House bill.

*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 fall from \$570.46 million in FY 24 to \$546.482 million in FY 26.

Of the CDS, the bill includes \$3.6 million for Sen. Gary Peters' (D-MI) request for the Port of Monroe's Strategic Cargo Infrastructure Project.

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."

