

# Great Lakes Provisions in the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Minibus

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Congressional leaders introduced a bipartisan, bicameral spending package in early January, 2026. The “minibus” covers the Commerce-Justice-Science, Interior-Environment, and Energy and Water appropriations bills.

It contains \$180 billion, lower than Biden-era spending levels, but far more than President Trump’s budget request. It would fund NOAA at \$6.56 billion, down from \$6.7 billion in FY2025, but up from the proposed \$4.5 billion in the President’s budget. NOAA’s National Ocean Service would be funded at \$677 million, a slight increase over FY 25 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 \$589 million, \$60 million below FY 25 levels.

The Interior-Environment bill would fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$369 million, \$1 million above the enacted level. The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds would be funded at FY 25 levels, and categorical grants that would have been eliminated under the President’s Budget are restored in the bill.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute prepared this Great Lakes summary based on the joint explanatory statement of the bill and will update it as more information comes in.

### **Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies**

| Program  | FY 25<br>Enacted | FY 26<br>Budget<br>Request | FY 26<br>House<br>Bill | FY 26<br>Senate<br>Bill | FY 26<br>Minibus | Notes   |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|
| NOAA’s Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes | \$39.5 million   | \$0                        | \$40 million           | \$39.5 million          | \$40 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          | \$81.5 million   |   |
| National Sea Grant College Program                   | \$80 million     | \$0                        | \$80 million           | \$80 million            | \$80 million     |   |
| Sea Grant Aquaculture Research                       | \$14 million     | \$0                        | \$14 million           | \$14 million            | \$14 million     |   |
| IOOS Regional Observations                           | \$42.5 million   | \$0                        | \$56 million           | \$43.5 million          | \$47.5 million   | This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes  |

|   |                |              |                |                |                | Observing System (GLOS)                      |
|---|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas      | \$67 million   | \$40 million | \$67 million   | \$68 million   | \$67 million   |  |
| Harmful Algal Blooms (Competitive Research) | \$14 million   | \$0          | See note*      | \$14 million   | See note*      |  |
| Regional Climate and Data Information       | \$47.9 million | \$0          | \$47.9 million | \$47.9 million | \$48.9 million | This NOAA account includes funding for GLISA |

\*The minibus 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 explanatory report as it is in the Senate version.

### **Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies**

| Program  | FY 24 Enacted   | FY 26 Request    | FY 26 Minibus    |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL | \$13.75 million | \$12.98 million* | \$12.98 million* |
| Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI                  | \$257.4 million | \$176.6 million  | \$176.6 million  |
| Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study                   | \$3 million     | \$3 million**    | \$3 million**    |
| Great Lakes Authority                                  | \$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)*

With regard to the Tennessee River and Cumberland River invasive carp demonstration projects authorized in Section 509 of WRDA 2020, the report instructs the Army Corps to “coordinate project partnership agreements concurrent with program development to ensure barriers can be deployed as soon as practicable. The Corps is further directed to

finalize the program management plan and begin assessing demonstration projects, including appropriate deterrent systems at Kentucky Lock.”

**Brandon Road:** The report instructs the Corps to continue to work with various partners to evaluate and identify carp deterrents for use at Brandon Road, and brief Congress on those deterrents.

**Regional Sediment Management:** The bill would provide \$2 million “to develop sediment transport models for Great Lakes tributaries.”

#### *Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)*

The bill directs \$2.5 million from the Aquatic Nuisance Control Research account to “supplement activities related to Harmful Algal Blooms.” Additionally, the bill would provide \$2.5 million to “develop next generation ecological models,” and another \$2.5 million “to work with university partners to develop prediction, avoidance, and remediation measures focused on environmental triggers in riverine ecosystems. All three items are below FY 24 levels.

### **Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

#### ***Environmental Protection Agency***

| Program                                   | FY 24 Enacted   | FY 26 Request | FY 26 House Bill | FY 26 Senate Bill | FY 26 Minibus   | Notes   |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---|
| Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) | \$368 million   | \$368 million | \$368 million    | \$368 million     | \$369 million   | The bill would fund the GLRI Distinct Tribal Program at \$16.5 million, \$500,000 more than in FY25.                                  |
| Clean Water State Revolving Fund          | \$1.639 billion | \$155 million | 1.208 billion    | \$1.639 billion   | \$1.639 billion | The bill would direct \$892.8 million (up 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   | \$1.126 billion | The bill would direct \$715.4 million (up 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 | \$72.27 million |  |
|-------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--|

*State and Tribal Assistance Grants*

| Program   | FY 24 Enacted   | FY 26 Request | FY 26 House Bill | FY 26 Senate Bill | FY 26 Minibus    |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>Infrastructure Assistance Grants</i>                     |                 |               |                  |                   |                  |
| Reducing Lead in Drinking Water                             | \$22 million    | \$20 million  | \$22 million     | \$32 million      | \$22 million     |
| Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability | \$6.5 million   | \$6.5 million | \$6.5 million    | \$6.5 million     | \$6.5 million    |
| Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works         | \$25.5 million  | \$10 million  | \$26 million     | \$25.5 million    | \$25.5 million   |
| Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants                  | \$41 million    | \$41 million  | \$44 million     | \$39 million      | \$41 million     |
| Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment                   | \$5.4 million   | \$6 million   | \$5 million      | \$5.4 million     | \$5.4 million    |
| Brownfields Projects  | \$98 million    | \$80 million  | \$84.7 million   | \$98 million      | \$98 million     |
| <i>Categorical Grants</i>                                   |                 |               |                  |                   |                  |
| BEACH Grants  | \$9.75 million  | \$0           | \$9.8 million    | \$9.75 million    | \$9.75 million   |
| Brownfields Protection                                      | \$46.25 million | \$0           | \$42.25 million  | \$46.25 million   | \$46.25 million  |
| Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319)                                  | \$174.5 million | \$0           | \$174.5 million  | \$174.5 million   | \$175.25 million |
| Pollution Control (Sec. 106)                                | \$225.7 million | \$0           | \$225.7 million  | \$225.7 million   | \$226.4 million  |
| Public water system supervision                             | \$116 million   | \$0           | \$115 million    | \$116 million     | \$116.7 million* |

\*Of the total, \$12 million is to address PFAS and other contaminants of emerging concern

*Additional Items of Interest*

*Lake Champlain*

The bill includes \$25.5 million to the Lake Champlain Program, \$500,000 more than in FY 25, to be used on phosphorus pollution, among other issues.

#### *Office of Research and Development*

In response to the administration's plans to close the Office of Research and Development, the report reads: "The Committees expect that the Agency's mission and all statutory obligations will continue, and that any current or future budgetary requests related to such actions are subject to and contingent upon compliance with applicable reprogramming and notification requirements."

#### ***Department of Interior***

| Program   | FY 25<br>Enacted | FY 26 House<br>Bill | FY 26 Senate<br>Bill | FY 26<br>Minibus |
|---|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>           |                  |                     |                      |                  |
| Invasive Carp Programs                          | \$31 million     | \$22 million        | \$28 million         | \$31 million*    |
| <i>U.S. Geological Survey</i>                   |                  |                     |                      |                  |
| Great Lakes Science Center                      | \$15 million     | \$15 million        | \$15 million         | \$15 million     |
| National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program** | \$43.5 million   | \$43.5 million      | \$43.5 million       | \$43.5 million   |
| Invasive Carp Research                          | \$11 million     | \$11 million        | \$11 million         | \$11 million     |

\*This amount includes \$4 million for contract fishing

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

#### *Additional Items of Interest*

##### *U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)*

##### *National Water Quality Program*

The bill includes \$94.5 million for the National Water Quality program, down from \$96 million in FY 25, \$7.49 million of which is to address harmful algal blooms.

##### *PFAS*

The bill includes \$9 million for PFAS research that supports farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.