

# Great Lakes Provisions in the FY 2027 House Appropriations Bills

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The House Appropriations Committee has passed two of the twelve appropriations bills for fiscal year 2027. The Commerce, Justice, and Science bill would fund NOAA at \$5.8 billion, \$300 million below FY26 enacted levels, but \$1.3 billion above the President’s Budget. NOAA’s Operations, Research, and Facilities would receive \$4 billion, down from \$4.5 billion in FY26, but an increase of \$700 million over the President’s Budget. It would reject cuts to NOAA research, the National Ocean Service, and NOAA Fisheries, and would flat-fund most of the Great Lakes accounts that NEMWI tracks, though the IOOS Regional Observations account would see an \$8.5 million (17.9%) increase.

The Energy, Water Development, and Related Agencies bill includes funding for construction of the Soo Locks and for operations and maintenance of the electric dispersal barriers at the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. It also includes \$5 million for the Great Lakes Authority. The accompanying bill report includes language supporting the Brandon Road Interbasin Project aimed at keeping invasive carp out of the Great Lakes. It “recognizes the national importance” of the project, and instructs the Army Corps “to continue to prioritize progress, as necessary, using the additional funding provided in this Act for projects to deter the expansion of carp into areas without established populations.” It also reminds the Corps to complete the Great Lakes Recreational Boating Study authorized in WRDA 2022.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute prepared this Great Lakes summary based on the text and Committee Report for the bills.

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

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 27 Budget Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 27 House Bill	Notes
NOAA’s Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes	\$40 million	\$0	\$40 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	
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	\$47.5 million	\$0	\$56 million	\$56 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS).
Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas	\$67 million	\$40 million	\$67 million	\$67 million	
Harmful Algal Blooms (Competitive Research)	\$14 million*	\$0	\$14 million*	\$14 million*	
Regional Climate and Data Information	\$48.9 million	\$0	\$47.9 million	\$49.9 million	This NOAA account includes funding for GLISA.
Navigation, Observations, and Positioning	\$186.3 million	\$140 million	\$183.7 million	\$183.7 million	Includes funding for NWLON and PORTS.

\*\$20 million is provided for the Competitive Research account. It is reasonable to assume that this includes \$14 million for HABs, but it is not explicitly delineated in the Committee report.

#### *Research Vessel Laurentian*

The report requests a briefing on “plans to replace the R/V Laurentian by its end of life in 2029; opportunities to partner with other State, Federal, and private sector entities to utilize NOAA ships on the Great Lakes for environmental monitoring, science, and management; and recent and planned investments in other environmental monitoring, science, and management platforms for the unique challenges in the Great Lakes.”

#### *Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)*

The report “notes the importance of the IOOS network,” especially with regards to “disaster response, weather forecasting and hurricane prediction, forecasting of freshwater and marine water quality, detection of harmful algal blooms, and safe maritime operations.”

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

The report supports the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA), especially mitigation efforts, and directs NOAA to “explore innovative methods” of HABs monitoring and forecasting in freshwater systems.

## Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 27 Request	FY 27 House Bill
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL	\$12.98 million	\$5.38 million	\$12.06 million
Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI	\$176.6 million	\$67 million	\$78 million*
Great Lakes Authority	\$5 million	N/A	\$5 million

\*The report also reiterates the request for a briefing on a special salary rate for employees at the Soo Locks, demanding a briefing from the Corps “as soon as possible.”

### Additional Items of Interest:

#### *Invasive Carp*

The report emphasizes the importance of preventing invasive carp from invading the Great Lakes. It supports the Brandon Road Interbasin Project and the electric dispersal barrier at the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, instructing the Army Corps to “to continue to prioritize progress, as necessary, using the additional funding provided in this Act for projects to deter the expansion of carp into areas without established populations,” and to collaborate with other agencies within the Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. Further, “The Committee expects the Corps to continue working in close partnership with states and other stakeholders to advance design and construction expeditiously.”

#### *Great Lakes Recreational Boating Study*

The report reiterates a requirement under WRDA 2022 for the Corps to complete an update of the study.

#### *Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER) Program*

“The Committee directs the Corps to reevaluate its cap [not raised since 2011] on federal costs for projects carried out through the GLFER”

#### *Dredging*

With regard to beneficial reuse of dredged material, the report directs the Corps to “utilize greater latitude and flexibility in interpreting and applying the beneficial use standard across the Great Lakes Navigation System,” particularly in the case of using dredged material from Lake Erie for agricultural purposes “to improve soil health and reduce runoff.”

#### *Great Lakes Harbors*

The report requests that the Corps include funding requests for Indiana Harbor and the Toledo, Huron, Port Clinton, Lorain, Sandusky, Toussaint, and Vermilion Harbors in future budget requests.

### *Thermal Reuse*

“The Committee directs the Department to provide not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act a detailed feasibility assessment of opportunities to capture and reuse thermal energy discharged into the Great Lakes—including from wastewater treatment and management systems, electricity generation plants (including nuclear power plants), industrial facilities, and other point-source thermal discharges in the United States, and to the extent practicable, in Canada—and to calculate its monetary value.”

### *Critical Minerals, Materials, and Manufacturing*

The report requests a report on “suitable locations within the United States for expanding electronics and electrochemical recycling capacity,” with a focus on the Great Lakes Region.

### *Great Lakes Science*

“The Committee directs the Department to provide not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act a report that assesses the scientific and laboratory capabilities in the Great Lakes Region. The report shall evaluate work conducted by the Great Lakes Region in the fields of advanced manufacturing, strategic materials science, resilient energy technologies, and grid modernization. The report shall also discuss where opportunities for enhanced scientific and laboratory capabilities exist.”

### *Biological and Environmental Research*

The report includes \$30 million for “the development of observational assets, modeling, and associated research on the Nation’s major land-water interfaces, including the Great Lakes and the Puget Sound, that leverages national laboratories’ assets as well as local infrastructure and expertise at universities and other research institutions.”

### *Aquatic Nuisance Control Research Program*

The report includes \$5 million for Harmful Algal Blooms research and control, especially in freshwater ecosystems; \$5 million for the HAB Demonstration Program; and \$5 million to continue development of next generation ecological models to maintain inland and intracoastal waterways.”