Great Lakes Provisions in the FY 2027 Senate Appropriations Bills

---

Prepared by Alex Eastman,

Great Lakes Program Manager,

Northeast-Midwest Institute

November 23rd, 2026



Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee introduced appropriations bills for fiscal year 2027 ahead of the deadline to fund the government next month. The Commerce, Justice, and Science bill would reject cuts to NOAA in the House bill and the President's Budget. It would fund the agency at $6.2 billion, roughly equal to FY 26 enacted levels. The bill 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.

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 $2.5 million for the Great Lakes Authority, down from $5 million in the House bill and in FY 26 appropriations. The accompanying bill report includes language supporting the Brandon Road Interbasin Project aimed at keeping invasive carp out of the Great Lakes. In the bill report, the Committee expresses frustration with the delays to the project, and "is concerned about the lack of timely communication with project sponsors, stakeholders, and congressional offices." The bill also directs the Corps to complete the Great Lakes Recreational Boating Study authorized in WRDA 2022.

The Interior-Environment bill would fund the EPA at $8.5 billion, down from $8.8 billion in FY 26, but more than the 20% cut proposed in the House bill. Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative would hold steady at $369 million, equal to FY2026 levels. The bill would also restore funding for capitalization grants that would have been cut by the President’s Budget. The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund accounts would be funded at a combined $2.76 billion, equal to FY 26. Furthermore, the bill would greatly reduce spending for earmarks, so the amount going to states' SRF programs would be significantly higher.

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 Request	FY 27 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill	Notes
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)					
National Ocean Service					
Navigation, Observations, and Positioning	$186.3 million	$140 million	$183.7 million	$183.7 million	Includes funding for NWLON and PORTS.
IOOS Regional Observations	$47.5 million	$0	$56 million	$47.5 million	Includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS).
Coastal Zone Management Grants	$81.5 million	$0	$81.5 million	$84 million	
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	
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research					
Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes**	$40 million	$0	$40 million	$40.5 million	Includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL).
National Sea Grant College Program	$80 million	$0	$80 million	$81 million	
Sea Grant Aquaculture Research	$14 million	$0	$14 million	$14 million	
Regional Climate and Data Information***	$48.9 million	$0	$49.9 million	$48.9 million	Includes funding for GLISA.

* Unlike the House report, the Senate report explicitly provides $14 million of the $20 million in the Competitive Research account for HABs, including “up to $2,000,000 shall be used to explore innovative methods” of HAB mitigation “in freshwater systems.”

** The bill instructs NOAA to "fund these cooperative institutes at appropriate levels in the fiscal year 2028 budget request."

*** For Regional Integrated Science and Assessment Programs, of which GLISA is one, the report "directs NOAA, for the next RISA recompete process, to provide 5-year awards."

Great Lakes Center of Excellence

The bill includes $10 million for NOAA's Center of Excellence for Operational Ocean and Great Lakes Mapping, rejecting the proposed elimination in the President's Budget.

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.”

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 27 Request	FY 27 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill
Great Lakes Authority*	$5 million	N/A	$5 million	$2.5 million
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers				
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL	$12.98 million	$5.38 million	$12.06 million	$12.06 million
Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI	$176.6 million	$67 million	$78 million	$78 million

* The report "highly encourages a Federal Co-Chair be nominated expeditiously" to stand up the GLA.

Other Items of Interest

Invasive Carp

The report supports the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, and directs the Corps to "continue to collaborate" with the USFWS, USCG, the State of Illinois, and the ICRCC.

"The Committee is concerned about the lack of progress on the Brandon Road project, a critically important initiative to maintain navigation of the Illinois River while protecting the Great Lakes from an invasive species that threatens our Nation's largest bodies of fresh water," the report reads. "The Committee encourages the Corps to continue working with the State of Illinois to expeditiously address any remaining real estate issues and to adjust the project as much as technically feasible to prevent cost increases related to real estate acquisition and remediation."

"Additionally, the Committee is concerned about the lack of timely communication with project sponsors, stakeholders, and congressional offices," the report adds.

Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study

The bill includes $1.3 million for the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, down from $3 million in FY 26.

Great Lakes Recreational Boating Study

As with the House report, the Senate report reiterates a requirement under WRDA 2022 for the Corps to complete an update of the study.

Aquatic Nuisance Control Research Program

As in the House report, the Senate report includes $5 million for Harmful Algal Blooms research and control.

Homeland Security

Great Lakes Heavy Icebreaker

The bill provides $25 million for a Great Lakes heavy icebreaker (less than the $30 million in the FY 27 House bill) and expresses concern that "the Coast Guard does not possess adequate capacity to meet its statutorily-required icebreaking mission on the Great Lakes, with negative consequences to the regional and national economy."

Great Lakes Center of Expertise for Oil Spill Preparedness and Response

The bill supports "the Coast Guard's work as a co-host of the Great Lakes Center of Expertise for Oil Spill Preparedness and Response."

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 26 Request	FY 26 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill
Environmental Protection Agency				

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)*	$369 million	$367.7 million	$369 million	$369 million
WIFIA	$72.27 million	$7.8 million	$72.27 million	$72.27 million
Infrastructure Assistance Grants				
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Account (total)**	$1.639 billion	$155 million	$1.19 billion	$1.639 billion
CWSRF Program	$745 million	$155 million	$667 million	$1.325 billion
CWSRF Community Project Funding	$893 million	$0	$525 million	$314.1 million
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Account (total)**	$1.126 billion	$150 million	$911 million	$1.126 billion
DWSRF Program	$411 million	$150 million	$405 million	$845.55 million
DWSRF Community Project Funding	$715 million	$0	$506 million	$280.55 million
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water	$22 million	$20 million	$22 million	$22 million
Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability	$6.5 million	$16.5 million	$7.5 million	$6.5 million
Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works	$25.5 million	$19 million	$26 million	$26 million
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants	$41 million	$41 million	$42 million	$41 million
Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment	$5.4 million	$5 million	$5 million	$6 million
Brownfields Projects	$98 million	$80 million	$85.1 million	$98 million
Categorical Grants				

BEACH Grants	$9.75 million	$0	$9.75 million	$9.75 million
Brownfields	$46.25 million	$0	$42.25 million	$46.25 million
Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319)	$175.2 million	$0	$178.63 million	$175.2 million
Pollution Control (Sec. 106)	$226.4 million	$0	$226.4 million	$226.4 million
Public water system supervision	$116.7 million	$0	$116.7 million	$116.7 million

* This figure includes $16.5 million for the Distinct Tribal Program, up from $15 million in the House bill.

** Inclusive of below

Lake Champlain

The bill includes $25.5 million to the Lake Champlain Program, equal to FY 26 levels and the House bill, to be used on phosphorus pollution, biodiversity, aquatic invasive species, and resiliency, among other issues.

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 26 Request	FY 27 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill
Department of Interior				
Fish and Wildlife Service				
Invasive Carp Programs*	$31 million	$13.9 million	$27 million	$28 million
Invasive Carp Contract Fishing	$4 million	$0	$4 million	$5 million
Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration program	$3 million	$0	$3 million	$3 million
Great Lakes Sea Lamprey	$1.01 million	$1.01 million	$1.01 million	
Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey	$818,000	$0	$818,000	$1.01 million

United States Geological Survey				
Great Lakes Science Center	$15 million	N/A	$15 million	$15 million
Invasive Carp Research***	$11 million	$11 million	$11 million	$11 million

* Inclusive of below

** Includes the Great Lakes Mapping Coalition

*** Includes $3 million for grass carp.

Additional Items of Interest

The bill "notes the Lake Explorer II vessel is close to being condemned and 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."

The bill directs the EPA to "brief the Committee before making changes to grant funding allocations or formula changes."

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Quagga and Zebra Mussels

The bill includes $3.5 million, equal to FY 26 enacted levels and the House bill, to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels.

Mass Marking

The bill includes funding for Great Lakes Mass Marking and calls it "essential to assessing hatchery production and supporting a robust fishery."

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

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

The bill includes funding for research on harmful algal blooms equal to FY 26 levels.

Climate Adaptation Science Centers

The bill includes $64 million for Climate Adaptation Science Centers around the country, including the Midwest CASC at the University of Minnesota.

National Water Quality Program

The bill includes $94.5 million for the National Water Quality program (equal to $94.5 million in FY 26 andup from $85.4 million in the House bill) and $7.49 million for harmful algal bloom research (equal to FY 26 levels and the House bill).

Great Lakes Science Center

The bill "supports the Great Lakes Science Center's collaboration with the broader Great Lakes Partnership to implement priority science," and "expects this work to continue at the fiscal year 2026 enacted level."

Contaminant Research in Tribal Territories of the Great Lakes Region.

The bill provides $500,000 for "support of research to understand the impact of PFAS contamination, accumulation, and exposure in the ecosystems of the Ceded Territories of the Great Lakes Region," and to "expand existing research into contaminants present in Tribal lands 59 and ceded territories, as well as traditionally grown and consumed plants and animals."

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 27 Request	FY 27 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill
Great Lakes Fishery Commission*	$52.4 million	$39 million	$58 million	$58.9 million
Lake Memphremagog and Lake Champlain Basins	$10 million	$0	$13 million	$13 million
Grass Carp	$1 million	$0	$1 million	$1 million
Lake Memphremagog Fishery	$500,000	$0	$500,000	$500,000
International Joint Commission	$10.9 million	$10.9 million	$15 million	$10.9 million

* Inclusive of below

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 26 Enacted	FY 27 Request	FY 27 House Bill	FY 27 Senate Bill
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation*	$38.1 million	$50 million	$42.2 million	$50 million
Seaway Infrastructure Program	$15.95 million	$25 million	$18.2 million	$25 million
Trade and Economic Development	$1 million	N/A	$1 million	N/A
MARAD Port Infrastructure Development Program*	$103.3 million	$550 million**	$538.2 million**	$415.4 million
PIDP Congressional Directed Spending***	$43.5 million	N/A	$38.2 million	$90 million

* Inclusive of below

** Because the PIDP received a supplemental appropriation of $450 million from the last year of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding last year, this funding level is a decrease from $553.3 million in total funding in FY 26.

*** This includes $4 million for a project at the Port of Monroe, requested by Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and $2 million for the Kaskaskia Regional Port District and $2.9 million for Shawneetown Regional Port District, both requested by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).

The report requires at least 25% of this funding for small inland river and coastal ports.