

Great Lakes Protection and Restoration Presidential Platform

Containing 95 percent of the nation's fresh surface water and supplying drinking water to more than 40 million people in the United States and Canada, the Great Lakes fuel our economy and are essential to our health, natural resources and way of life. The Great Lakes create a unique competitive advantage for the region, which accounts for nearly one-third of combined U.S. and Canadian economic activity. Every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration generates at least \$2 in return, making Great Lakes restoration one of the best investments on the dollar in the federal budget. More than 1.5 million U.S. jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes, generating over \$62 billion in wages annually. For example, the more than 35 million people who boat, fish, hunt, and view wildlife in the region generate over \$33 billion annually while the regional maritime sector directly contributes more than \$30 billion to the U.S. and Canadian economies and accounts for more than 220,000 jobs. Investing in the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes is not only sound policy, but also has significant economic benefits for the region and the country. We simply must protect and restore the Great Lakes.

For all of these reasons, the past two presidential administrations and both political parties in Congress have made restoring and enhancing the Great Lakes a national priority. Over the last six years, bipartisan action from the White House and Congress have helped support more than 2,900 local projects in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, New York, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Illinois that are helping to restore these iconic waters. The \$300 million a year in federal funds devoted to one Great Lakes restoration program alone (the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative) is cleaning up legacy contaminants, fighting invasive species, restoring habitats, and finding solutions for polluted run-off. But much more work needs to be done to enhance communities, grow businesses and fully protect and restore the Great Lakes – to guarantee the water is safe to drink, infrastructure is modern and efficient, fish are safe to eat, to stem the invasion of non-native species, to eliminate dead zones and to reopen beaches that are now closed to swimmers.

To address these serious threats, more than 1,500 Great Lakes citizens, businesses, non-governmental organizations and local, state, tribal and federal agencies and organizations developed a comprehensive Great Lakes restoration plan in 2005 called the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes. The Strategy is the foundation of today's highly successful federal Great Lakes restoration efforts.

We are asking presidential candidates to make a commitment to the Great Lakes by supporting the Great Lakes Protection & Restoration Platform.

Great Lakes Protection & Restoration Platform

Protecting and restoring the Great Lakes for the 40 million people who depend on them for drinking water in the United States and Canada, millions who enjoy outdoor recreation on the Lakes, and 1.5 million people whose jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes will be a priority for my administration.

I support the outcomes outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, including decreasing beach closures and sewer overflows, cleaning up contaminated areas of concern, restoring wetlands, stopping harmful algal blooms, preventing invasive species, and promoting sustainable development;

I support appropriate policies and programs that promote the Great Lakes region as a driver of economic growth and job development;

I support authorizing and maintaining at least \$300 million per year (current funding levels) for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative;

I support implementing appropriate measures to address the threat of harmful algal blooms to drinking water, public health, businesses and wildlife across the Great Lakes region—for example, I will require federal agencies to support the implementation of the agreement reached by the governors of Ohio and Michigan and the Premier of Ontario to reduce nutrient pollution to the Western Lake Erie Basin by 40 percent by 2025;

I support federal investments in infrastructure necessary to reduce sewage overflows, protect drinking water and preserve opportunities for recreation and tourism;

I support the infrastructure investments necessary for maintenance and improvements in locks, ports, harbors and other maritime assets; and

I will make my support of the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Platform public to demonstrate my support for our Great Lakes and the citizens, businesses, and wildlife that depend upon them.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

