

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin: Introduces bipartisan legislation to renew and expand funding for the Great Lakes

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), a member of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, introduced bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and expand funding for the Great Lakes.

The *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019* will reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which is set to expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2021, for another five years. The bill increases the current authorization level from \$300 million to \$375 million in Fiscal Year 2022 and increases funding by \$25 million per year until it reaches \$475 million in Fiscal Year 2026. Senator Baldwin was joined by Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH), co-Chairs of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, and Representatives David Joyce (R-OH) and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) in introducing this bipartisan legislation.

"The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has earned bipartisan support and is critical for the health of our region, our communities, and our clean water resources. It helps us clean up polluted sites, restore water quality and combat invasive species," **said Senator Baldwin.** "Preserving the Great Lakes is not just an environmental goal - it is an economic necessity for Wisconsin, and making stronger, long-term investments in GLRI will better help us ensure that our Great Lakes are protected and preserved for generations to come."

"This Initiative has proven results which is why both Republicans and Democrats from both the House and Senate are behind this bill," **said Senator**

Stabenow. “With these positive results and given continued threats to our water, it’s a no-brainer to continue investing in the health of our Great Lakes and waterways.”

“I’m pleased to join my colleagues in introducing this bipartisan bill. GLRI is successful public-private partnership that has helped address the greatest threats to the Great Lakes, including harmful algal blooms, invasive species, pollution, and contamination. Despite the program’s success, there is more work to be done,” **Senator Portman said.** “Lake Erie supports fishing and tourism industries totaling nearly \$13 billion and is a top tourist destination in Ohio. With 11 million people depending on Lake Erie for their drinking water and hundreds of thousands of Ohioans depending upon the Lake for jobs, we must continue to protect our Great Lakes for the economic and environmental well-being of our region.”

“The Great Lakes are an invaluable natural resource and economic powerhouse, providing more than 1.5 million jobs, supplying 90% of our nation’s fresh water, supporting over 3,500 species of plants and animals, and generating \$62 billion in wages every year,” **said Congressman Joyce.** “Having successfully fought to provide the GLRI with full funding every year since being elected to Congress, I’m proud to continue spearheading this effort with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure we make the necessary investments to treat the Great Lakes like the national treasure they are.”

“Since its inception, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has made the Great Lakes healthier and our local communities stronger,” **said Congresswoman Kaptur.** “That’s why it’s my pleasure to join my House and Senate colleagues in introducing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019. This bipartisan and bicameral bill will reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the most essential program in the effort to protect and restore our most precious resource: the Great Lakes. This legislation doubles down on federal investment in the Great Lakes because we know how effective the GLRI has been. Across Lake Erie and the Great Lakes Region, the GLRI is at the center of fighting invasive species, preventing, controlling and predicting harmful algal blooms, and reinvigorating our watershed and ecosystems.”

Since its inception, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has tripled the successful cleanup and delisting of Areas of Concern, reduced phosphorus runoff and the threat of harmful algal blooms, controlled and stopped the advancement of invasive species, and restored wildlife habitat over thousands of miles of rivers and waterways. Since 2010, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has provided more than \$2.5 billion to fund 4,706 projects throughout the Great Lakes region.

Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Vice Chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, Gary Peters (D-MI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Bob Casey (D-PA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Todd Young (R-IN), Vice Chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, and 40 members of the House of Representatives are co-sponsors of the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2019*.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).