

Great Lakes Provisions in the FY 2025 House Appropriations Bills

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On July 10th, the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations passed the last of the 12 appropriations bills. The bills passed largely on party lines. They propose significant cuts to many agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, which would be cut by 20%, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which would be cut by 11%, from FY 24 enacted levels. Many Great Lakes programs and accounts within those agencies, however, would be spared those cuts. For example, funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative would remain flat from FY 24 at \$368 million under the Interior and Environment bill, and NOAA’s IOOS Regional Observations account would increase from \$42.5 million in FY 24 to \$56 million under the Commerce, Justice, and Science bill.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute prepared this Great Lakes summary based on the committee reports of the bills, and will update it in the coming days as more information becomes available.

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 24 Enacted	FY 23 Enacted	FY 25 Budget Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
NOAA’s Ocean Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes	\$39.5 million	\$39.5 million	\$37.2 million	\$39.5 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL).
Coastal Zone Management Grants	\$81.5 million	\$81.5 million	\$81.5 million	\$80 million	
National Sea Grant College Program	\$80 million	\$80 million	\$72.4 million	\$80 million	
Sea Grant Aquaculture Research	\$14 million	\$14 million	\$0	\$14 million	
IOOS Regional Observations	\$42.5 million	\$42.5 million	\$10 million	\$56 million	This NOAA account includes funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)
Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas	\$67 million	\$68 million	\$86.1 million	\$40 million	

Additional Items of Interest

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

While an exact number for Harmful Algal Bloom research is not included, the bill would increase NOAA's Coastal Science and Assessment Competitive Research Account to \$22.7 million from \$20 million enacted for FY24. Of the \$20 million in FY24, \$14 million went to HABs research.

The bill also includes the following HABs language, identical to the language in the FY24 Explanatory Statement except for added language, which NEMWI has bolded for clarity:

“The Committee supports the work of the [National Science Foundation’s] Oceans and Human Health program to support research into the human health impacts of HABs in marine coastal regions, the Great Lakes Basin, and freshwater systems. The Committee further encourages research to better understand how the influx of nutrients, including dissolved nitrogen and phosphorus, **and the effects of soil amendments, pesticides, and herbicides on soil absorption of nutrients** contribute to HAB outbreaks.”

Coastal Zone Management Grants Community Project Funding

As requested by Rep. Kennedy (D-NY), the bill would direct \$443,000 to Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper for “Addressing Climate and Coastal Resiliency Threats, Risks, and Solutions for Lake Erie’s Eastern Basin.”

As requested by David Joyce (D-OH), the bill would direct \$1.75 million to the city of Mentor, Ohio, for shoreline stabilization.

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Dispersal Barriers, IL	\$14.33 million	\$13.75 million	\$17.98 million	\$17.98 million
Sault Sainte Marie (New Soo Lock), MI	N/A	\$257.4 million	\$264.13 million	\$326.83 million
Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million	\$3 million
Great Lakes Authority	N/A	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million

Additional Items of Interest:

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

The bill would provide the Corps with \$200,000, equal to the budget request and the FY 24 enacted level, for interbasin control of Great Lakes-Mississippi River aquatic nuisance species.

The report makes reference to Section 509 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020, which established a pilot program to control invasive carp in the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. It expresses that the Committee “remains concerned that the Corps is making insufficient progress,” and directs the Corps to provide quarterly updates to the Committee. The report also notes that Brandon Road Lock and Dam is “critical to keeping invasive carp out of the Chicago Area Waterways System.”

Great Lakes Navigation System

In reference to the St. Mary’s River, the report “reminds the Corps” that they have the authority “to increase channel dimensions at entrances, bends, sidings, and turning places to allow for the free movement of vessels on the channel, and that such work is eligible to compete for the additional funding provided in this Act. Further, the Corps is encouraged to include appropriate funding in future budget requests.”

The report notes that “the Toledo, Huron, Port Clinton, Lorain, and Sandusky Harbors are eligible to compete for additional funding in this account [the Corps’ O&M account]; that Sandusky, Lorain, and Huron qualify as emerging harbors; and that emerging harbors must be prioritized for funding, as appropriate.” The Committee also encourages the Corps to use dredged material to “fortify Lake Erie shorelines against damage from seasonal high water.”

In response to discussion about a special salary rate for employees at the Soo Locks, the report reads, “the Committee is aware the Department of Defense’s wage scale adjustment has negatively impacted salaries for government employees at Soo Locks. The Committee understands the highly specialized nature of these positions and is concerned that this action imposes both hardship on these employees and could pose a risk to retention, hiring, and to the Corps’ ability to meet operational requirements at a facility that is critical to domestic supply chains. The Corps is directed to provide to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act a briefing on the status of any efforts related to a special salary rate.”

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The agreement contains the following language on, and funding for, harmful algal bloom programs: “Within available funds, \$5,000,000 shall be to supplement activities related to harmful algal bloom research and control, and the Committee directs the Corps to target freshwater ecosystems; \$5,000,000 shall be to continue work on the Harmful Algal Bloom Demonstration Program, as authorized by WRDA 2020; and \$5,000,000 shall be to continue development of next generation ecological models to maintain inland and intracoastal waterways. The Corps is urged to work collaboratively with university partners as appropriate to address these issues.”

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund

Total funding for activities eligible for reimbursement from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) are estimated at \$3,147,000,000, \$318,000,000 above FY 24 and \$1,421,000,000 above the President’s budget request.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$368 million	The agreement also includes \$15 million for “tribal-related activities” The committee also expressed concern about HABs in the Great Lakes, and urges the EPA to use GLRI funds to invest in “innovative projects, including wetland and other natural infrastructure projects.”
BEACH Grants (Categorical Grants)	\$10.62 million	\$9.75 million	\$9.81 million	\$9.75 million	
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.639 billion	\$1.639 billion	\$1.239 billion	1.203 billion	The bill would direct \$533.9 million (down from the FY 24 level of \$787.7 million) of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants for constructing waste-water and storm-water infrastructure and water quality protection.
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	\$1.126 billion	\$1.126 billion	\$1.126 billion	\$883.52 million	The bill would direct \$479.5 (down from the FY 24 enacted level of \$631.7 million) of this funding to Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grants for the construction of drinking water infrastructure and water quality protection.

Department of Interior

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
USFWS Invasive Carp Programs	\$31 million	\$31 million	\$21 million	\$26 million	The agreement includes \$3 million for contract fishing and \$23 million for all other invasive carp activities.
Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration program	\$3 million	\$3 million	N/A	\$3 million	
Great Lakes Sea Lamprey	\$1.01 million	\$1.01 million	N/A	\$1.01 million	USFWS budget justification includes \$48.37 million for aquatic invasive species control, an increase of \$7.2 million from FY 2022.
USGS Great Lakes Science Center	\$15 million	\$15 million	\$0	\$15 million	
USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program	\$44.56 million	\$43.5 million	\$46.32 million	\$43.5 million	This USGS account includes the Great Lakes Mapping Coalition
USGS Invasive Carp Research	\$11 million	\$11 million	\$10.6 million	\$11 million	\$3 million of this total is to be used for research on Grass Carp

Additional Items of Interest

EPA

Great Lakes Consent Decree

The agreement includes \$1 million for the Great Lakes Consent Decree at EPA, equal to the FY 24 enacted level.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

The agreement provides \$6 million, equal to FY 24 levels, to investigate adverse health effects from exposure to HABs and cyanobacteria toxins and to develop methods to monitor, predict, and characterize blooms to allow for early action and management.

Lake Champlain

The agreement includes \$818,000 for The Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Program. Also, it includes \$25 million to the Lake Champlain Program, to be used on phosphorus pollution, biodiversity, aquatic invasive species, and resiliency, among other issues. Both totals are equal to FY 24 enacted levels.

Other relevant EPA grant programs

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG))	\$25.01 million	\$22 million	\$64.48 million	\$22 million
Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability (STAG)	\$7 million	\$6.5 million	\$25 million	\$6.5 million
Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works (STAG)	\$27 million	\$25.5 million	\$18 million	\$25.5 million
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants (STAG)	\$50 million	\$41 million	\$50 million	\$41 million
Water Infrastructure Workforce Investment (STAG)	\$6 million	\$5.4 million	\$6 million	\$5 million
Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319) (Categorical Grants)	\$182 million	\$174.5 million	\$189 million	\$174.5 million
Pollution Control (Sec. 106) (Categorical Grants)	\$237 million	\$225.7 million	\$288.7 million	\$225.7 million
Public water system supervision (Categorical Grants)	\$121.5 million	\$116 million	\$132.6 million	\$116 million

WIFIA

The agreement provides \$72.27 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program, equal to FY 24 levels, but down from \$75.64 million in FY 23.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency

National Invasive Species Act (NISA)

The bill includes \$2.83 million for NISA State Plans and \$1.57 million for NISA implementation, which helps control the spread of invasive carp. Both totals are equal to FY 24 enacted levels.

Quagga and Zebra Mussels

The agreement includes \$3.5 million, equal to FY 24 enacted levels, to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

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

The bill includes \$4.75 million, equal to FY23 and FY24 levels, for research on harmful algal blooms.

National Water Quality Program

The bill includes \$84.4 million for the National Water Quality program (down from \$100 million in FY 23 and \$96 million in FY 24) and \$7.49 million for harmful algal bloom research (maintained at FY 23 and FY 24 levels).

Great Lakes Groundwater

The Committee commissions a Water-Resources Investigations Report on groundwater conditions in the Great Lakes. “Specifically, the Committee encourages information specific to indirect ground-water discharge to the Great Lakes as well as ground-water recharge rates for the entire watershed to determine the role of ground water in the hydrologic budget of the Great Lakes,” the report reads.

PFAS

The Committee requests a report on the implementation of EPA’s enforcement discretion under the new rule designating PFAS as a hazardous substance under CERCLA. Regarding the EPA rule establishing Maximum Containment Levels for PFAS

in drinking water, “The Committee remains interested in receiving updated information regarding the number of water systems that will be impacted by the rule, the impact on ratepayers, and the cost of compliance with the final rule.”

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC)	\$50 million	\$50 million	\$39.5 million	\$50 million	Of the \$50 million, \$1 million must be used to address grass carp. The report also expressed support for the GLFC’s infrastructure plan, saying “It is critical to the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem that the United States and Canada continue to maintain and improve their respective infrastructure.”
International Joint Commission (IJC)	\$10.88 million	\$10.88 million	\$11.9 million	\$11.9 million	While the committee report accompanying the Bill does not give a reason for the increased funding, the President’s budget noted that “the additional funding will be dedicated to addressing critical cybersecurity needs, water resource issues, and an inflation increase.”

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)	\$38.5 million	\$40.29 million	\$40.6 million	\$40.6 million	The bill directs that at least \$16.4 million (up from \$16.3 million in FY24) be provided for the seaway infrastructure program. The bill provides \$1 million for trade and marketing and trade development and promotion of the Great Lakes navigation system.
MARAD's Port Infrastructure Development Program	\$212.20 million*	\$120.46 million*	\$80 million	\$72.4 million*	Of the total, the agreement provides \$22.4 million, down from \$70.46 million in FY 24, for Community Project Funding.

*The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law appropriated \$450 million for the PIDP per year from FY 2022 – FY 2026, so were this funding level to be enacted, total appropriations for the program would fall from \$570.46 million in FY 24 to \$522.4 million in FY 25.

The report includes the following language on port funding inequities: “The Committee recognizes the importance of IIJA’s PIDP funds to advance critical priorities at our nation’s ports, and acknowledges the need to continue upgrading vital infrastructure at small and inland ports with deepwater shipping channels. The Committee supports MARAD’s consideration of cost-effectiveness when awarding PIDP grants and encourages the Secretary to also consider geographic diversity in its award of PIDP awards at the state and national levels.”

Homeland Security

Program	FY 23 Enacted	FY 24 Enacted	FY 25 Request	FY 25 House Bill	Notes
Great Lakes heavy icebreaker (GLIB)	N/A	\$20 million	\$55 million	\$20 million	Rep. James (R-MI) sponsored a successful amendment to move \$20 million from the Office of the Secretary to the United States Coast Guard for the GLIB.