

Great Lakes Declaration

Protecting and Restoring the Great Lakes through a
Regional Collaboration of National Significance

We, the Conveners of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, established on December 3, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, in acknowledgement of Executive Order 13340 signed by President George W. Bush on May 18, 2004:

1. Recognize that the Great Lakes are an international treasure which contain about 20 percent of the earth's fresh surface water, support the culture and life ways of native communities, provide drinking water to millions of people, and form the backbone for billions of dollars in shipping, trade, fishing and recreation;
2. Recognize that the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, as amended by protocol signed November 18, 1987, the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries of 1954, and other regional multi-jurisdictional agreements with Canada, commit the United States and Canada to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem, including the adoption of common objectives and cooperative programs;
3. Recognize that while there has been progress in restoring and improving the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem, there are still tremendous threats to the physical, biological and chemical integrity of the ecosystem;
4. Note that citizens, as well as many federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, elected officials, and stakeholder groups, including the environmental non-governmental organizations, industry groups, and the agricultural community, serve a vital role in protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem;
5. Acknowledge that numerous multi-governmental and non-governmental stakeholder networks have demonstrated a long history of effectively collaborating on a variety of complex regional and local ecosystem protection and restoration efforts; and
6. Affirm the need for leaders in the region, including Great Lakes Governors, federal agency heads, Members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, Great Lakes mayors and Tribal Leaders, building upon the extensive regional efforts to date, to collaboratively work together and with the Great Lakes community toward a common goal of protecting and restoring the Great Lakes ecosystem in order to address the new and continuing challenges and ensure a healthy ecosystem for future generations.

Hereby, consistent with the laws applicable to our respective jurisdictions, pledge our support for the development of a widely understood and broadly supported strategy including actions to further protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process.