



## **BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN: COMMITTED TO GREAT LAKES RESTORATION**

The Great Lakes are one of the world's greatest natural treasures. They are the largest fresh water body on our planet, providing the principal source of drinking water for 42 million people, support for a \$4.5 billion annual recreational and sport fishing industry, and recreational opportunities for millions of Americans who swim in the Lakes, play on the beaches and walk along the shoreline.

Today, the Great Lakes are under unprecedented stresses. Years of degradation from the build up of toxic sediments, mercury and other air pollutants, wetlands destruction, invasive species and pollution from antiquated sewage systems have left the Great Lakes at a tipping point. The impacts from global warming threaten to hasten and exacerbate this potentially catastrophic situation. Fortunately, we know many of the solutions to these serious threats. And, there is bipartisan political will and cooperative public and private goodwill to achieve them. It is time now for aggressive action to implement a comprehensive restoration plan for the Great Lakes, because the longer we wait, the worse the problems become and the higher the price of restoration. An investment in restoring the Great Lakes is an investment in our outdoor heritage and environment as well as the economy.

Barack Obama and his family have lived by the shore of Lake Michigan for 20 years. He knows, understands and cares about the Great Lakes and has the record to prove it. As a State Senator, he worked to help clean up Lake Michigan. As a United States Senator, he is a key leader on the bipartisan Great Lakes Compact -- legislation which ensures that as demand for water grows for our businesses and communities, the Great Lakes region will be ready to create jobs and support growth in a sustainable way. He was also a co-sponsor of the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act and other legislation to help prevent the spread of invasive species, promote cleanup initiatives and projects, and prevent sediment pollution. In contrast, Senator John McCain has repeatedly failed to support critical legislation and even opposed measures to preserve the Great Lakes, including cleanup initiatives and projects to prevent sediment pollution. He also opposed funding to complete the Asian Carp Barrier Project to prevent invasive species from reaching the Great Lakes.

The Obama-Biden vision for the future of our Great Lakes will:

- **Provide New Federal Funding of \$5 Billion to Jumpstart Great Lakes Restoration**
- **Designate a Great Lakes Coordinator to Prioritize Coordination of Federal, State and Local Agencies**
- **Ratify and Fully Implement the Great Lakes Compact to Conserve Water and Protect Against Water Diversions**

***Protecting and Restoring the Natural Heritage of the Great Lakes:*** Barack Obama has a plan to restore the Great Lakes ecosystem and to revive this engine of economic prosperity. The plan is built around a commitment to restore our outdoor heritage: pure and safe drinking water; fish that are safe to eat; and a healthy resource for all Americans to use and enjoy. Barack Obama will replace empty talk with serious action to protect and restore our Great Lakes. His five-point plan for restoring our Great Lakes includes:

## **1. \$5 BILLION GREAT LAKES TRUST FUND**

Barack Obama will provide \$5 billion in new federal funds to jumpstart the restoration work and capture the economic, ecological and community quality of life values. The money to establish this trust fund will be generated from rolling back tax breaks and loopholes for big oil and gas companies.

Federal funding is desperately needed to invest in the sewage repairs, toxic cleanups, and wetlands restoration that will maintain and restore the greatness of the Lakes. The \$5 billion investment will support clean beaches and new parks, build boat ramps, and protect open spaces, wildlife habitats and wetlands. An Obama-Biden administration will make the federal government a full partner with states and municipalities in addressing wastewater treatment and storm water control needs. Funding will help eliminate sources of pathogenic pollution that puts public health at risk rather than just funding to study the problem. As a State Senator with lakefront district that included beaches that regularly closed, Barack Obama understands that healthy beaches contribute to local economies and must be clean for families to enjoy.

According to the Brookings Institution, an investment in Great Lakes restoration will create jobs and improve the local economy. A healthy Great Lakes ecosystem would boost the long-term regional economy by an estimated \$50 billion and create a short-term economic gain of at least \$30 billion. Brookings concludes that for each \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration, \$2 or more will be generated in additional jobs, property value, and other economic enhancements.

## **2. AGGRESSIVE TOXICS PLAN FOR THE GREAT LAKES**

The Obama-Biden Administration will end the "business as usual" approach to toxic releases into the Great Lakes. Their toxics plan for the Great Lakes will comprehensively measure current toxic loadings, identify significant sources of new toxics, and develop an integrated strategy for reducing toxic deposits in the Great Lakes that harm fish, wildlife and people.

To address harmful mercury pollution, Obama will not only implement and enforce the Clean Air Act, but he will also strengthen the federal mercury pollution reduction standards in order to protect children's health and our environment. Under his Great Lakes Restoration Plan, toxic legacy "hot spots" will be prioritized and cleaned up.

## **3. GREAT LAKES COORDINATOR**

The current piecemeal approach to dealing with the Great Lakes ecosystem is neither efficient, nor effective. The Obama-Biden Administration will designate a Great Lakes Coordinator in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to prioritize coordination of Federal, State and Local Agencies' agendas, policies, expertise, funds and staff.

## **4. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR INVASIVE SPECIES**

Invasive species threaten the ecological balance of the Great Lakes; over 160 exotic species have already invaded the Lakes. Invaders like zebra mussels deprive fish of food, cause blooms of toxic algae and overtake spawning areas and drinking water intakes. Recent research indicates that invasive species are costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in ecological damage.

The Obama-Biden Administration will address the serious problem of invasive species by taking more aggressive steps to prevent their introduction into the Great Lakes. He will join in efforts with the eight Great Lakes states to stop the discharge of invasive species from the ballast water of ships. They will aggressively

pursue policies and dedicate federal funds to control and prevent Asian Carp and other new harmful species from entering the Great Lakes. They will also enhance investment in research, development and necessary actions, such as electric barriers, to support efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species, as well as to educate citizens and stakeholders.

**5. "NO WATER DIVERSIONS" COMPACT POLICY THAT WORKS FOR THE GREAT LAKES**

Barack Obama is a lead cosponsor of the Great Lakes Compact legislation. The Compact is an agreement between the eight lake-bordering states to protect the Great Lakes from water diversions and exports. As President, he will work closely with the Governors and municipal leaders to encourage water conservation and avoid out-of-basin diversions in the future.

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