



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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WHEREAS, the Great Lakes comprise almost 20% of the world's surface fresh water and 95% of North America's fresh surface water, and supply drinking water to more than 40 million U.S. and Canadian residents; and

WHEREAS, Lake Michigan alone contains 4.3% of the world's fresh surface water, less than 1% of which is renewed annually; and

WHEREAS, Lake Michigan supplies drinking water to more than 8 million Illinoisans and to all of the people of the city of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Chicago's Lake Michigan shoreline parks and beaches provide unrivaled and vital recreational, quality of life and economic benefits to the city of Chicago, its residents and its visitors;

WHEREAS, Chicago's Lake Michigan marinas comprise the largest municipal harbor system in the Great Lakes and the nation;

WHEREAS, Lake Michigan is threatened by pathogens that close beaches; sewage overflows that cloud the Chicago River and the lake; invasive species that disrupt infrastructure, damage boating and fishing and cost the region hundreds of millions of dollars each year; and toxic contamination of sediments that threatens the health of people and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes region has recognized the cost of addressing these threats at more than \$20 billion and joined together in an unprecedented collaborative effort of governors, mayors, tribes, businesses, nongovernmental organizations and federal leaders to protect and restore the Great Lakes under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; and

WHEREAS, economists have found that every \$1 invested to restore the Great Lakes leads to at least \$2 in economic benefit; and

WHEREAS, since 2010 the White House and a strong bipartisan coalition in Congress have provided more than \$1.3 billion for this Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has been highly successful and is producing results on the ground around the region and in Chicago, such as the restoration of Northerly Island and the Calumet region, cleanup and protection of Chicago's beaches, the restoration of the Chicago River and the engagement of thousands of Chicago youth and adults in this work; and

WHEREAS, much work remains to be carried out under the Initiative, and this work will only get more expensive and challenging if delayed; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 Members of Congress proposed severe cutbacks to the Initiative; and

WHEREAS, a strong bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress and the President remain fully committed to the implementation of the Initiative; therefore

Be It Resolved, we call upon Congress to restore funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$300 million to protect our lakes, our drinking water, our quality of life, our economic vitality and the health of our families and children.