



Great Lakes Protection and Restoration Candidate Pledge

I recognize that with 95 percent of the nation's fresh surface water, the Great Lakes are one of America's most precious natural resources. We can't afford not to protect the Great Lakes – they provide drinking water for 30 million people as well as jobs, food and recreation for millions of Americans and a critical habitat for fish and wildlife. More than 1.5 million U.S. jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes, generating \$62 billion in wages annually. The protection and restoration of the Great Lakes is an essential national public health, security, economic and environmental imperative.

I recognize that today the Great Lakes suffer from serious threats such as toxic pollutants, sewer overflows, invasive species, water level reduction and contaminated sediment. These dangerous problems have led to illness, algal blooms, record beach closings and fish consumption advisories, habitat loss and billions of dollars in economic damage. To address these threats, over 1,500 Great Lakes citizens, businesses, and local, state, tribal and federal agencies developed a comprehensive Great Lakes restoration plan called the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy that is the foundation of today's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

I recognize that Asian carp are poised to invade the Great Lakes. Canals are a highway for invasive species to travel in both directions between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River and have already transmitted zebra mussels from the Great Lakes to as far west as California (31 states in all) at great economic and ecological cost. This crisis could not be more urgent: one new invasive species enters the Great Lakes an average of every 28 weeks. We cannot afford to wait.

I recognize that investing in the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes is not only sound policy, but also has significant economic benefits for the region and the country. I recognize that cutting restoration funding—and failing to act on Asian carp—will cost taxpayers more money because problems will only become more difficult and expensive the longer we wait.

As a candidate for President of the United States of America, I will not put off addressing the nation's most severe problems. Therefore,

I pledge to make Great Lakes protection and restoration a priority within my administration.

I will maintain historic funding levels and, where appropriate, increase Great Lakes restoration funding over existing levels in my annual budgets for the priorities outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for future protections of the Great Lakes, such as fewer beach closures and sewer overflows, more clean up of toxic sediments, more restoration of wetlands, and greater prevention of new invasive species; and

I support a permanent solution to the threat of Asian Carp and other aquatic invasive species entering the Great Lakes. I will order the Army Corps of Engineers to take all necessary measures to construct a permanent barrier to hydrologically separate the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes basin at Chicago. Those measures include completion of a study by December 31, 2013, to determine the best means of hydrological separation; interim actions to prevent the Asian carp from establishing breeding populations in Lake Michigan until the construction of the permanent barrier is completed; the inclusion of the necessary funds for those measures in my budget proposals to Congress; and the development and implementation of a long-term financing strategy to construct and operate the permanent barrier.

I pledge to protect our Great Lakes, and to working with the citizens, businesses, workers, tribal, state, and local governments who share the goal of ensuring that these critical resources are healthy for future generations.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

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