



The Great Lakes Gateways Network Act of 2025

Declared a “national treasure” by Executive Order in 2004, the Great Lakes and their watershed are rich in unique natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources. With 94,600 square miles of surface water, 10,000 miles of shoreline, 35,000 islands, 532,938 acres of coastal wetlands, and 27.8 million hectares of forest, the Great Lakes support a variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and two globally important migratory bird flyways.

Home to twenty national wildlife refuges, 7 national parks, lakeshores, monuments, and memorials, 6 national forests, and many state parks, wildlife management areas, and trail systems, the watershed’s assets afford numerous recreational opportunities, including boating, fishing, hiking, beach use, and birding, that generate more than \$52 billion annually for the region. It is a region rich in history and cultural heritage, central to the stories of our nation’s indigenous peoples, the westward expansion of the United States, the industrial revolution, and abolition.

The Great Lakes Gateways Network Act of 2025 will help conserve, restore, and interpret the precious historical, cultural, recreational, and natural resources in the Great Lakes Watershed by catalyzing public and private investment in a linked network of gateway sites. Modeled on the **Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998**, the bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide matching grants to state and local governments, non-profits, and the private sector to develop and conserve important resources within the gateway system, enhancing public education and access regarding the region’s unique heritage.

The bill authorizes \$6 million annually for fiscal years 2026 through 2031.

If you have any questions, contact TJ.Lowdermilk@mail.house.gov in Rep. Marcy Kaptur’s office or Bridget.Henne@mail.house.gov in Rep. Joyce’s office