



Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC) Task Force on Climate Resiliency Policy Recommendations

Increased temperatures, high precipitation events, and other forms of extreme weather are affecting the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region's people, environment, and economy. The GLLC's Task Force on Climate Resiliency developed the following policy recommendations for Great Lakes state and provincial legislators to consider when pursuing policies to grapple with climate change impacts.

The adoption of consistent, environmentally centered, evidence-based best practices to improve climate resiliency is vital in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. The following recommendations apply to each GLLC jurisdiction, as well as coordinated across the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region. To note, the Task Force puts forth these recommendations to be considered alongside decarbonization and emissions reduction policies.

Recommendations for GLLC Actions

- Emphasize the role of state and provincial legislators in regional studies, such as the [Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study](#), as well as advocate for collaborative, binational studies.
- Partner with all levels of government, including Tribal and First Nations, municipalities, and counties, as well as Great Lakes organizations to coordinate resources and action plans on climate resiliency.
 - Pursue close partnership with the [National Association of Counties](#), [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#) (Mayors Commission on Coastal Resiliency), [Great Lakes Commission](#) (Resilience Standing Committee)
- Collaborate with experts to develop resources, as well as model legislation, that can be easily used and adapted by legislators across the region.

Recommendations for State/Provincial Legislative Action

Regulations and Standardsⁱ: Pursue updates to building codes, land use policies, permitting, and infrastructure to account for observed and expected climate impacts.

- Recommend separation of combined sewer overflow systems, increase NPDES standards (for states) and form a priority list for separation based on environmental and public health benefits.
- Adapt permitting and review processes to advance nature-based solutions to shoreline restoration and protection.

- Advocate for a stewardship mindset, particularly related to preserving wetlands, when pursuing development policies.
- Coordinate regulations and standards with Tribal and First Nations and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge.

Planning Guidance: Engage in equitable, climate resilience planning to outline susceptible areas and identify at-risk infrastructure.

- Climate resiliency planning should include emergency management processes, prevention measures, and long-term adaptation goals.
- State and provincial climate resiliency planning and efforts should incorporate principles of environmental justice and public health.
- Create formal structures for equitable participation in decision-making for especially with BIPOC communities, youth voices, and small-scale agricultural producers.
- Pursue meaningful engagement with Tribal and First Nations, recognizing stewardship and expertise.

Information: Provide education, incentives, and accountability measures, focused on empowering community groups and property owners.

- Create incentives for governments to engage in resiliency policy, especially in areas without existing resiliency plans.
- Require communication to residents about property in floodplains and flood hazard areas.
- Serve as an educator about state/provincial policy and action to communities.
- Help define metrics for progress and success around climate resiliency.

Funding and financing: Ensure coordinated, equitable distribution of funds for resilience projects.

- Prioritize green infrastructure projects within state clean water and drinking water programs.
- Connect communities, including Indigenous partners, with federal funding programs, assist with batching and layering the assistance programs.

Approved by GLLC membership on September 10, 2024

¹ The outlined policy categories of regulations and standards, planning guidance, information, and funding and financing are from: Sara Hughes, Caroline Resor & Heather Newberry (2023): State policy and local resilience: evaluating state policies for flood resilience in the Great Lakes region of the United States, Climate Policy, DOI: 10.1080/14693062.2023.2242309