RESOLUTION # 4

Maintain FY 2020 Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Whereas, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest surface fresh water system on the Earth, accounting for 84% of North America’s surface fresh water; and,

Whereas, the GLRI is vital for the protection of ecologically unique habitats within the Great Lakes basin, that includes eight US States and two Canadian Provinces; and,

Whereas, the GLRI has provided approximately $2.5 Billion federal funds to support more than 4,000 projects, focused on improving water quality, protecting native habitat, cleaning up environmentally impaired areas, protecting human health, and combating invasive species; and,

Whereas, the Nonpoint Source Pollution Impacts on Nearshore Health progress through FY 2017 has prevented an estimated 767,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Great Lakes; and,

Whereas, more than 225,000 acres of habitat including coastal wetlands have been protected, restored, or enhanced and 4,900 river miles have been cleared for fish passage; and,

Whereas, GLRI investments have resulted in increasing property values and property tax bases by targeting and cleaning up 66 Beneficial Use Impairments within the Great Lakes basin; and,

Whereas, the GLRI supports protection of drinking water sources for those communities who draw their water from the Great Lakes, thus reducing infrastructure costs of water treatment; and,

Whereas, the GLRI, federal agencies and local partners have taken actions to control invasive species on over 134,000 acres; and,

Whereas, halting or dramatically reducing this commitment to our Great Lakes would reverse years of progress and jeopardize the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes region; and,

Whereas, in 2018 a bipartisan funding agreement was passed by the Senate to maintain GLRI funding at the annual level of $300 million; and,

Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association requests the entire Wisconsin legislative delegation to support at a minimum the $300 million annual funding level for the GLRI in the upcoming FY 2020 federal budget.

Adopted by the WI Land+Water Board of Directors, March 13, 2019. Adopted at the Business Meeting of WI Land+Water, March 15, 2019