Drinking Water Infrastructure and Equity Roundtable Report

National Wildlife Federation

Healing Our Waters® Great Lakes Coalition

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Overview

In September and October of 2021, the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional Center (NWF) and the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) held a series of water infrastructure and equity roundtables with over 50 frontline leaders and policy experts from Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Three urban-focused roundtables and two rural-focused roundtables were convened to discuss such topics as lead line replacement, water infrastructure investment, and water affordability. While there were separate sessions for urban and rural participants, many of the issues and opportunities discussed affect all people within the Great Lakes region (the region), regardless of their geographic location. The goal of the roundtables was to continue to build on the principles and collective work that has already been done in the region, especially by frontline community organizations. Collectively, we discussed how to build a long-term strategy to guarantee water affordability and access for all in light of the increased federal investment in drinking water infrastructure. By coming together, we can unite the region around these shared principles, develop and implement strategies to seize this opportunity, and tackle systemic water problems as a unified front.

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METHODOLOGY

NWF and HOW reached out to dozens of water policy and frontline community leaders to obtain the broadest possible perspectives on the needs of the region. Each of these sessions were held virtually via Zoom, limiting our personal interaction because of the pandemic, but expanding the range of people who could participate. At the onset of each session, we discussed the potential opportunities for increased water infrastructure funding to the region. Participants covered everything from current and historical problems facing Great Lakes communities, to systemic barriers obstructing possible ways forward—and the opportunities to work together to solve these problems. This report reflects the ideas and opinions shared by the various leaders who participated in the roundtables, and includes proposed recommendations addressed to advocacy organizations, state and federal lawmakers, state and federal agencies, and public water utilities. The goal is for the many participants, including NWF and HOW, to build on this work together to ensure everyone in the region has access to safe, affordable drinking water.

Problems with Drinking Water Equity and Affordability

Roundtable participants discussed the many problems facing the communities they represent in terms of equitable water access and an affordable water supply. Federal disinvestment in drinking water financing is a driving force behind many of these problems. In 1977, the federal government invested in 60 percent of the total water infrastructure funding in the United States; as of 2017, that number was down to 9 percent.[1] This decades-long disinvestment has threatened the safety and quality of water resources, the durability and longevity of water infrastructure, and the affordability of residential drinking water, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities.

Participants relayed that communities across the region are facing issues of lead contamination, increased flooding, rampant water shutoffs, excess and polluted urban and rural runoff, leaking septic systems, combined sewer overflows, and emerging contaminants such as PFAS. Recent notable events such as the Flint water crisis caused by lead contamination and the Toledo water shutoffs resulting from harmful algal blooms have brought heightened attention by elected officials and media outlets around water quality, equity, and access. These events and crises have had the greatest impact on communities populated by Black People, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC), and economically disadvantaged rural and urban communities. These communities face disproportionately higher water rates, poorer water quality, and less access to federal water infrastructure funding.

Moreover, water rates are increasingly unaffordable in the region, with some studies showing that over one third of all Americans could be unable to afford their water by 2024.[2] Over the last decade, water rates have almost tripled in Chicago, more than doubled in Cleveland, and significantly increased in Detroit, Duluth, and Buffalo.[3] Aging infrastructure coupled with declining populations have passed increased costs for water infrastructure maintenance, repairs, and replacement onto a declining number of residents. Rising costs have also put disadvantaged communities—namely Black and Latinx populations—at a higher risk of water shutoffs, which threaten public health, housing security, child custody, and basic human dignity. This public health crisis is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and related illnesses in the absence of moratoriums against water shutoffs.[4]

"Even during a global pandemic, communities had to beg for relief as it relates to the shutting off of water…that moratorium didn't just happen."

"[Detroit] is a perfect example of how the weaponizing of water can be used to privatize and regionalize systems and actually thwart democracy."

Photo credit: Creative Commons

Participants also pointed to state and federal policies that have undermined people's right to clean water. From instituting financial emergency management to privatizing water distribution, anti-democratic policies have stripped communities from their access to publicly provided water. Disadvantaged communities have then had to turn to federal funding programs with fewer resources to alleviate rising water costs spurred by these policies. Far too often, those federal allocations have not reached the communities that need them most, furthering concerns of inequitable resource apportionment. Similarly, too often funding for drinking water infrastructure has failed to reach the most economically disadvantaged rural communities, which have also faced issues of contaminated water supplies. Participants from large metropolitan areas and rural communities often identified similar barriers to ensuring access to the resources needed to meet their drinking water needs.

1 https://InfrastructureReportCard.org/
2 https://InfrastructureReportCard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Drinking-Water-2021.pdf
3 https://www.apmReports.org/story/2019/02/07/great-lakes-water-shutoffs
4 https://www.ScienceDaily.com/releases/2021/10/211027134959.html

The Opportunity

In spite of these persistent issues of equity in access to safe drinking water, participants were optimistic that we could collaboratively address the most pressing water infrastructure, affordability, and access barriers in the region. Previously passed and potentially future federal funding presents a once-in-a-generation investment in drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure that could address many of the problems the participants have outlined. With the continued support of the participants and other stakeholders in the region, this historic water infrastructure funding can and should reach communities that need it most.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 delivered $350 billion for state and local fiscal recovery funds, which can be used for water and wastewater improvements.[5] ARPA also includes the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), which is a $1.1 billion emergency program to reduce water debts and limit water shutoffs for disadvantaged households.[6] These funding provisions have already been partially allocated to states, counties, and metropolitan areas to implement.

Additionally, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021 authorized billions of dollars for water infrastructure funding, primarily through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs). This investment includes several billion dollars for replacing lead service lines, eliminating emerging contaminants, and assisting disadvantaged communities. The Act includes over $23 billion in enacted funding (Table 1) over the next five years and over $43 billion in authorizations that can be funded through the annual federal appropriations process (Table 2). The region will benefit immensely from this investment, with each state receiving over $100 million in SRF funding in fiscal year (FY) 2022 (Table 3).[7]

The IIJA represents the single largest federal investment in water infrastructure in the nation's history, totaling over $50 billion. These funding levels present a historic investment in both SRFs, increasing the investment by almost $30 billion over the next five years compared to the previous five years (Table 4). While this is an important and consequential achievement, this investment is only a first step in addressing the water infrastructure crisis impacting the region. The Great Lakes states need many billions of additional infrastructure investments over the next 20 years from federal, state, local, and private sources.[8] At the time of this report, one potential source of some of those resources is pending before Congress as it continues to consider additional water infrastructure investment of

"As go the Great Lakes, so goes the nation."

Table 1. Clean water and drinking water state revolving fund enacted investments through the IIJA from 2022 through 2026.

	Clean Water SRF	Drinking Water SRF
2022	$ 1,902,000,000	$ 1,902,000,000
2023	$ 2,202,000,000	$ 2,202,000,000
2024	$ 2,403,000,000	$ 2,403,000,000
2025	$ 2,603,000,000	$ 2,603,000,000
2026	$ 2,603,000,000	$ 2,603,000,000
Total	**$ 11,713,000,000**	**$ 11,713,000,000**

Table 2. Clean water and drinking water state revolving fund authorizations through the IIJA of 2021 from 2022 through 2026.

	Clean Water SRF	Drinking Water SRF
2022	$ 4,039,000,000	$ 3,526,000,000
2023	$ 4,389,000,000	$ 3,876,000,000
2024	$ 4,639,000,000	$ 4,126,000,000
2025	$ 4,889,000,000	$ 4,376,000,000
2026	$ 4,889,000,000	$ 4,376,000,000
Total	**$ 22,845,000,000**	**$ 20,280,000,000**

Table 3. Total state revolving fund dollars enacted by the IIJA for each of the eight Great Lakes states for fiscal year (FY) 2022.

State	FY2022 Amount
Illinois	$288,290,000
Indiana	$127,705,000
Michigan	$213,201,000
Minnesota	$116,792,000
New York	$428,072,000
Ohio	$241,554,000
Pennsylvania	$240,381,000
Wisconsin	$142,703,000

5 https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds
6 https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/lihwap
7 https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-12/governors-bil-letter-final-508.pdf
8 A summary of the water infrastructure needs in each state in the region over the next 20 years compiled by HOW can be found here: https://i0.wp.com/healthylakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GLRI-Investment-Needs.jpg?ssl=1

Table 4. The increase in investments from the clean water and drinking water state revolving funds from 2017-2021 and 2022-2026.

5-year Investments	Historical Investments (2017-21)	IIJA Investments (2022-26)	Increase
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	$8 billion	$11.7 billion	+$4.7 billion
Emerging Contaminants		$1 billion	
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	$5 billion	$11.7 billion	+$25.7 billion
Lead Line Replacement		$15 billion	
Emerging Contaminants		$4 billion	

$10 billion for lead service line replacement as part of Build Back Better, but its outcome is uncertain. The future of this additional funding and the implementation of the IIJA funding will inform what additional resources will be needed to ensure safe drinking water for all.

Historically, most of the SRF program funds had to be paid back with interest. This was a barrier for many communities and utilities to access these funds. The IIJA will require that half of the funds in the general (or non-targeted) SRF program investments program must be used to provide 100% principal forgiveness or be distributed as grants, a significant increase over the previously capped level. Moreover, the $25 billion in targeted funds for lead service line replacement and emerging contaminants is mandated to be fully distributed as grants or loans with 100% principal forgiveness. This subsidization can dramatically reduce the cost burden of repairing or replacing failing infrastructure for many of our communities. However, as discussed below, additional actions will be needed to ensure infrastructure investment goes to those communities where the need is greatest.

As a region, the Great Lakes states are well positioned to seize the opportunity afforded by this additional federal funding. Organizations and communities in the region can influence the discussion and implementation by being coordinated, strong, and strategic. Participants agreed that a united front that prioritizes community needs can shape funding allocation and utilization, as well as policy and administration changes, to capitalize on this unique opportunity.

"There is a deep technical divide that basically disenfranchised our communities from participating in the political process and being a part of the discourse."

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Systemic Barriers to Equitable Water Resource Access

While this is a historic investment in water infrastructure, roundtable participants expressed concern that these funds would not be invested in rural and urban disadvantaged communities—especially communities of Color—due to multiple systemic barriers. The historic and systemic racism of the current water infrastructure system and other urban policies and investment, such as redlining and zoning practices, underlie many barriers to equitable funding allocation in urban areas. Environmental laws and utility policies were designed without the consultation of, and often at the expense of, BIPOC communities. Too often, new policies fail to fully account for these underlying factors, and therefore fail to adequately address the community needs.

In many communities, there is a lack of technical and managerial capacity that hinder the treatment and delivery of clean water. In rural areas, those who administer water systems and implement policies and the infrastructure investment often lack cultural competency and an understanding of the communities that they serve. This is compounded by the confluence of smaller populations, generally lower incomes, and physically spread out residents. Additionally, many policies and regulations are one-size-fits-all and do not take individual community needs into account. As governments work to get federal funding out the door, roundtable participants cited a need for a corresponding effort to enact systemic changes to ensure funding goes to the communities that need it most. Without an intentional effort to overcome these barriers, it is possible that more money through existing channels could exacerbate equity concerns and harm disadvantaged communities even further.

"The same set of rules and regulations applied to vastly different systems can lead to poor outcomes."

Photo credit: Laura Rubin

OBSTACLES IN FUNDING PROGRAMS

Many participants reported that water funds administered through federal and state regulatory agencies often create obstacles for the frontline communities that they are supposed to serve. Federal funding provisions do not often prioritize communities with the greatest need and the most pollution, and they fail to consider specific community needs such as the declining populations in many rural and urban communities, and the aging water infrastructure in the region. Some of the specific systemic barriers to accessing federal funds were identified as:

- Federal loan programs (e.g., State revolving funds (SRF) and USDA rural assistance loans) do not provide enough funding in the form of grants or principal forgiveness in lieu of loans that often put low-resource communities into debt for decades.
- Allocation of SRF funding prioritizes "shovel ready" projects and does not consider "shovel worthy" projects where the community may lack the capacity and resources to fully develop the project proposal.
- Burdensome restrictions on the use of federal funds have a significant negative impact on economically disadvantaged communities. (e.g., USDA loans are not allowed to be used to connect rural residents to water mains; funding can be considered as taxable income).
- Varying state definitions of "disadvantaged community" serve as obstacles to obtaining funding and cause harm to vulnerable populations.

"While the funding is important, it's not enough."

"More money flowing through the same systems is not going to get us the results we need."

OPERATIONAL ISSUES WITHIN STATE AGENCIES

Participants repeatedly noted that the programs for disbursing funds for drinking water assistance and infrastructure are administered by state agencies that too often have dysfunctional processes and insufficient capacity. Application procedures are often unnecessarily complicated, requirements are onerous, and state agencies provide inadequate assistance to municipalities and communities to enable them to access the available resources. The participants identified many specific problems including:

- Rules and regulations often mandate prescriptive policies and/or approaches, rather than basing standards on outcomes (i.e., maintaining a source of clean water for all).
- Lack of coordination among agencies at the local, state, and federal levels creates a disjointed process for communities to seek out funding.
- Failure by states to capture the federal dollars as a result of political polarization or ideological disagreement with the federal programs.
- Liaisons between communities and regulatory agencies often do not have any actual authority or enough support to be successful—if they exist at all.
- It takes money to simply apply. Proposals require plans, consultants, and information not available to low-income communities.

INADEQUATE INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Many participants discussed how a lack of community engagement and information sharing has created a climate of distrust and contributed to inadequate investments in disadvantaged communities and their residents. Lack of available information and fear of financial risk prevents communities and individuals—including households connected to a municipal water supply and those that maintain individual wells—from utilizing funding opportunities and assistance programs. Too often, decision makers, state agencies, and utilities have provided little to no education around water infrastructure funding distribution or its benefit to communities. By failing to engage community residents and community-based organizations, their expertise and experience is not considered in creating policies at all levels of government. Specifics of this are:

- Communities are often unaware of available resources (e.g., federal funding provisions, water assistance programs) to improve their water infrastructure and alleviate affordability concerns.
- Residents are often not reached and there is a lack of door-to-door engagement with information about staying safe throughout lead service line replacement and about the effects of lead and emerging contaminants.
- Many residents are unaware of the contaminants in their water (i.e., because many contaminants cannot be seen, have no taste, and have no smell), and do not know the risk that those contaminants present.
- Agencies and utilities lack cultural competencies, or awareness of the needs of specific communities, to work in the communities that they serve. There is a lack of communication between the agencies and utilities and those residents that results in a lack of trust.

"[Federal funding] can't just be about investing in the infrastructure, it has to also invest in the people."

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LACK OF INVESTMENT IN JOBS, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND BIPOC AND COMMUNITY BASED BUSINESSES

When there is an investment in water infrastructure, those who receive the economic benefits and employment opportunities often fail to reflect the communities being served. While small and rural communities are often unable to afford staff to apply for and implement federal funding opportunities, large, urban communities tend to hire contractors from outside the area, leaving community members without the training necessary to fill these positions. Additionally, the water sector workforce has been disproportionately older, male, and white, leaving out younger, female, and BIPOC community members from these jobs and opportunities. The specific impacts that participants noted include:

- Water infrastructure funding does not often provide for jobs or career paths that would ensure the benefits go to community-owned businesses and impacted residents.
- Water infrastructure funding does not provide access to training, education, and development opportunities that would make community members successful in water infrastructure jobs.
- Water infrastructure positions—especially lead service line replacement—are not entry level jobs and require certain levels of training and education that are inaccessible to disadvantaged communities.
  The water sector does not emphasize environmental justice when hiring, hire within BIPOC communities, or ensure contractors/consultants are culturally competent.

FAILURE TO ADDRESS WATER AFFORDABILITY AND INSUFFICIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Water rates have increased significantly for many people. Utilities do not often take the most vulnerable communities into account when setting water rates, leading to increased water shutoffs and debilitating debt for residents. A lack of process, transparency, and data collection by utilities has also caused water rates to increase with no supervision from a centralized regulatory system. Water assistance programs are one way that public water utilities have aimed to address these growing issues. While these programs are necessary and valuable, participants emphasized that they are a temporary band-aid approach to systemic issues, and should not be an excuse for failing to address the inequities of flat or usage-based rate structures. Water affordability must ultimately be addressed through the implementation of progressive rate structures that take household income and ability-to-pay into account. Roundtable participants concluded that creating affordable rate structures and ending water shutoffs will not only ensure access to water and alleviate the associated social costs, but will ultimately save utilities from the financial costs of water shutoffs.

"You can't assist me to pay for something I cannot afford."

Photo credit: Jim West/Alamy Stock Photo

Recommendations

In order to address these systemic challenges, participants proposed many potential solutions and recommendations. While participants discussed all of these recommendations, there was not sufficient time to reach agreement or consensus around each recommendation or to prioritize among them. Therefore, these recommendations have not been endorsed fully by NWF, HOW or any participant.

The recommendations have been grouped to reflect the actions that advocacy organizations and activists, elected officials, state regulatory agencies, and public water utilities should consider to move toward the goal of clean, safe, affordable water for all.

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS

- Organize to advocate on behalf of communities to state departments, local implementing agencies, school boards, and utilities on how to allocate funding equitably, act with urgency to address emergencies, increase filtering and lead testing for schools and daycares, implement progressive rate structures, and prevent water shutoffs.
- Increase collaboration on best practices and continue sharing the work that is being done across the region. Disseminate toolkits and checklists to help communities pursue grant funding, receive technical assistance, and understand lead service line replacement and filter safety. Translate these materials into multiple languages and distribute them to community leaders to reach the broadest audience possible.
- Identify the best state policies that address affordability, rate structures, and funding to ensure equitable water resource quality and apportionment. Hold policy roundtables across the region to share opportunities for water infrastructure funding, community engagement strategies, and develop next steps for regional collaboration.
- Support existing tables and/or create ongoing tables led by various organizations across the region that will continue to work on addressing each of the systemic barriers that have been identified and further refine and address proposed solutions.
- Create a local advocate training program to build trust with rural communities and reach residents in places they connect, such as county fairs, community colleges, rural extensions, Facebook/online groups, community presentations, breweries, etc., to educate and engage them on water funding opportunities.
- Establish an emergency fund for communities facing widespread water contamination, unaffordable water rates, or other threats to their well-being (e.g., distribute bottled water to residents of Benton Harbor, Mich., supplement bill payments to prevent water shutoffs).

"We shouldn't be addressing the symptoms without doing something to address the disease."

Photo credit: National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Center

FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Propose and support a federal moratorium on all residential/household water shutoffs. Ensure that states will no longer be able to use water shutoffs as a viable policy option.
- Support President Biden's Justice40 Initiative. Provide frontline communities with the technical knowledge and capacity to implement this initiative directed toward curbing systemic inequities.
- Permanently enact a Low-Income Household Water Affordability Program. Establish a separate pot of assistance funding for emergencies with a design that prioritizes urgent rollout when needed.
- Develop a minimum standard for what qualifies as a disadvantaged community in regard to federal loan programs. Institute a minimum amount that states distribute to disadvantaged applicants in the form of grants and principal forgiveness. This definition must take into consideration the viewpoints of those communities that are directly affected by what it encompasses.
- Enact additional programs and appropriations to meet the infrastructure needs in the region.

STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Prioritize water infrastructure funding when allocating flexible funds from pandemic relief and other sources. Prioritize equitable access and affordability when distributing water infrastructure funds.
- Maintain democracy in our water systems by eliminating emergency management, preventing the privatization of water systems, ensuring that clean, affordable water is a public good, and, in the absence of federal action, instituting a moratorium on all water shutoffs.
- Use means testing to distribute all educational, economic, and employment benefits that address water quality and access to the residents of economically disadvantaged and impacted communities first.
- Address the significant barriers for individuals to receive the benefits of water programs like low-income water assistance funding (e.g., assistance costs considered taxable income, immigration status, maximum limits on funding amounts per application).
- Provide funding and assistance that enables all communities and utilities to access infrastructure funds.
- Guarantee that jobs and training for community members are connected to this incoming funding.
- Provide funding for schools and daycare facilities to install water filters in every building. Emphasize testing after filters are installed. Ensure that funding is delivered to schools and daycares in low-income communities first.

STATE REGULATORY AGENCIES

- Revise the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program by providing more SRF funding as grants or principal forgiveness to disadvantaged communities. Although the IIJA requires that the 49% of new SRF funds be provided as grants and principal forgiveness, the existing statutory framework sets the ceilings on the amount of funding that can go to grants or principle forgiveness (one recommendation is to increase that amount), but state SRF agencies should be allocating the full amount for grants that they are authorized where need exists.
- Allow for loan repayment to begin after project construction has been completed.
- Give more priority to projects undertaking lead service line replacement and building green infrastructure.
- Create additional planning and design grants for communities that would otherwise lack the resources or capacity for planning and design.
- Create a one-page comprehensive application for federal funding opportunities (e.g., SRFs, USDA rural assistance loans).
- Present funding options to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities to ensure they have the technical capacity to submit these applications and the necessary funding to ensure that needed projects become "shovel ready."
- Create a position for a state level advocate on water infrastructure separate from the primary state agency. This advocate should come from the non-profit/community-based advocacy community to build trust between residents and their regulators.
- Facilitate conversations between rural, suburban, and urban systems. Address the political divide between these populations and encourage collaboration across geographic boundaries (e.g., via consolidation, regionalization, cooperative agreements) to share capacity, create more holistic plans, and engage in more efficient implementation.
- Establish a centralized entity in each state to provide guidance to all water utilities on affordable rate design, and collect and report water affordability data.

PUBLIC WATER UTILITIES

- Define "affordability" based on each customer's ability to pay or ratepayer impact of water burden, not on median household income or other similar measures. Affordability measures must consider the most disadvantaged residents first and foremost.
- Create and support an online database that showcases water assistance programs and federal funding opportunities. Ensure this information is effectively communicated and available to all members of the community, including rural residents with limited access to broadband internet and residents whose primary language is not English.

Photo credit: Alexandra Iakovleva/iStock Photo

- Develop plans that leverage allocated assistance funding for long-term affordability investments. Utilize these set aside funds for debt forgiveness, water source testing, renter protections, and other emergency assistance programs for customers.
- Promote apprenticeship programs to get people involved in the water sector who are not in school or are unemployed. Market water infrastructure jobs (e.g., lead service line replacement, utility management) for working class people in disadvantaged communities.

Conclusion

By understanding and addressing the long-standing barriers that have created inequities in access to safe, affordable drinking water, the advocacy organizations and activists, federal and state governments, state regulatory agencies, and public water utilities can deliver this historic funding and future infrastructure investments to economically disadvantaged communities and those communities where there is a greatest need. As federal infrastructure and other investments are implemented, NWF, HOW and the organizations and advocates that joined the roundtables expressed a strong desire to continue to work together to ensure dollars are allocated equitably to underserved and economically disadvantaged communities to realize the human right of safe drinking water for all.

Photo credit: iStock Photo

The quotes found in this report are all statements made by participants during the roundtable sessions.

Roundtable Participants

Mustafa Santiago Ali	*National Wildlife Federation (NWF)*
Huda Alkaff	*Wisconsin Green Muslims*
Jeffrey Broberg	*Minnesota Well Owners Organization (MNWOO)*
Pete Bucher	*Ohio Environmental Council (OEC)*
Anna-Lisa Castle	*Alliance for the Great Lakes*
Oliver Ciciora	*Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL)*
Eliot Clay	*Illinois Environmental Council (IEC)*
James Clift	*Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)*
Maureen Cunningham	*Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC)*
Bill Davis	*River Alliance of Wisconsin*
Crystal Davis	*Alliance for the Great Lakes*
Richard Diaz	*BlueGreen Alliance; Coalition on Lead Emergency (COLE)*
Bartlett Durand	*Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC); Sand County Foundation*
Sheyda Esnaashari	*River Network*
Anne Evens	*Elevate*
Andrea Gelatt	*Midwest Environmental Advocates*
Jennifer Giegerich	*Wisconsin Conservation Voters*
Catie Gregg	*Prairie Rivers Network*
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Katy Hansen	*Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC)*
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Destinee Henton	*American Rivers*
Jennifer Hill	*National Wildlife Federation (NWF)*
Charlotte Jameson	*Michigan Environmental Council (MEC)*
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Jennifer McKay	*Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council*
Kristy Meyer	*Freshwater Future*
Ezra Meyer	*Clean Wisconsin*
Steve Morse	*Minnesota Environmental Partnership*
Cheryl Nenn	*Milwaukee Riverkeeper*
Caroline Pakenham	*Elevate*
William Palmer	*Need Our Water (NOW); Oscoda Township Board of Trustees*
Briana Parker	*Elevate*
James Polidori	*National Wildlife Federation (NWF)*
Denise Poloyac	*National Wildlife Federation (NWF)*
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Adam Voskuil	*Midwest Environmental Advocates*
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Dr. Karen Weaver	*Clinical Psychologist & Former Flint Mayor*
Zach Welcker	*For Love of Water (FLOW)*
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Justin Williams	*Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)*