



Broad Public Support for Great Lakes Restoration

Findings from a 2016 Regional Survey

March 2016

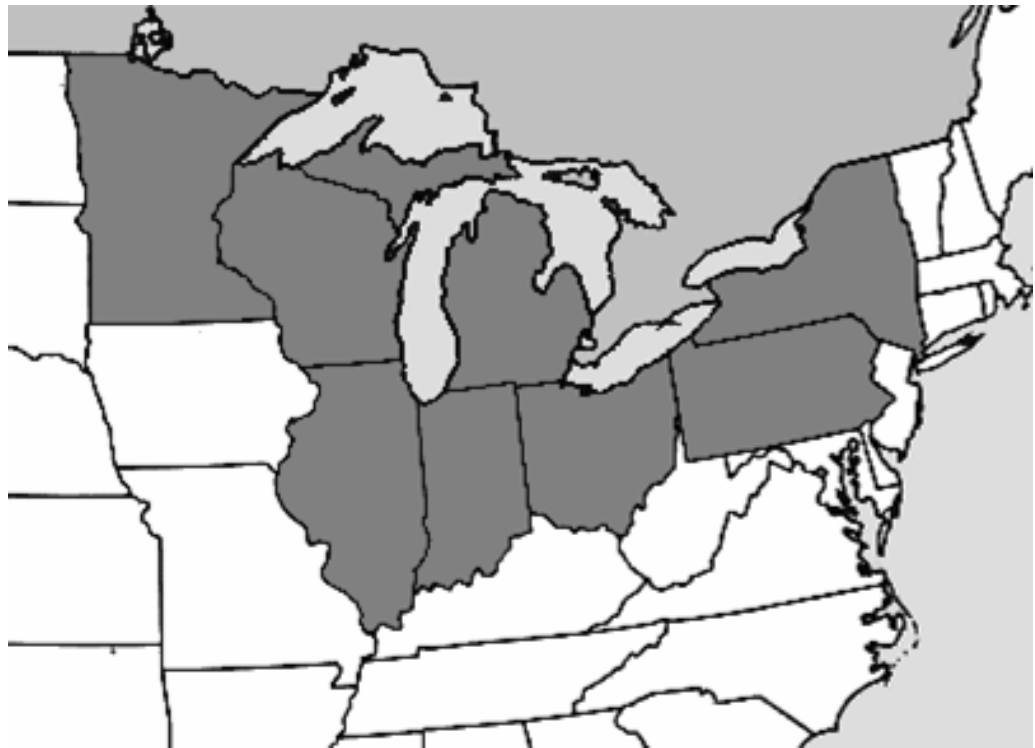


Opinion Research ■ Strategic Communication

We conducted a representative survey of residents of the Great Lakes region.

Survey Details:

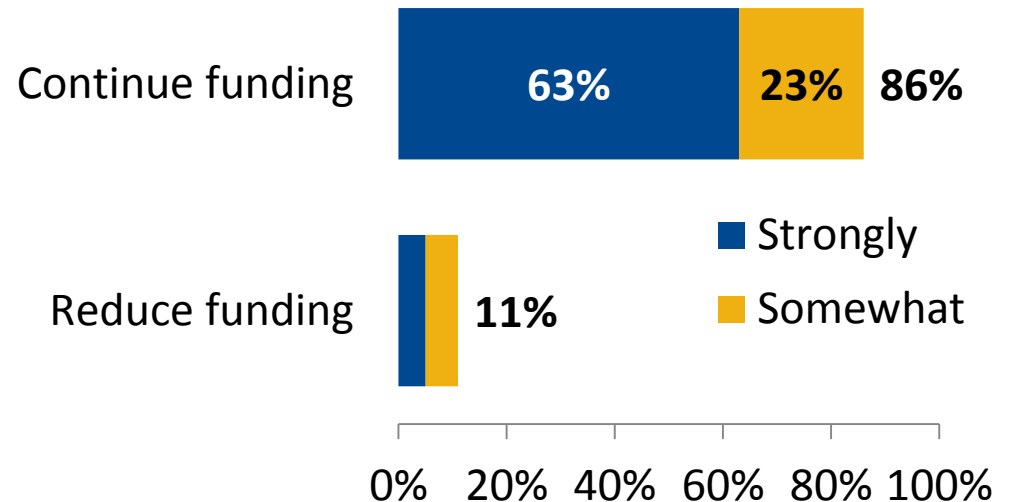
- Belden Russonello Strategists, LLC conducted the study for the National Wildlife Federation
- N=1,535 adults in MN, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH, Erie County PA and NY outside the New York Metropolitan Area
- Interviews conducted by live interviewers on landline and cell phone from random digit dial (RDD) sample
- February 5-18, 2016
- Margin of sampling error +/- 2.5 percentage points and 95% confidence level



A broad majority of the region supports Great Lakes restoration funding.

After hearing that...
“Over the last six years, the U.S. federal government has spent over 300 million dollars a year to improve the condition of the Great Lakes by cleaning up toxic waste and bacteria, reducing runoff pollution from cities and farms, and protecting and rebuilding wetlands”
...over eight in ten support continued funding

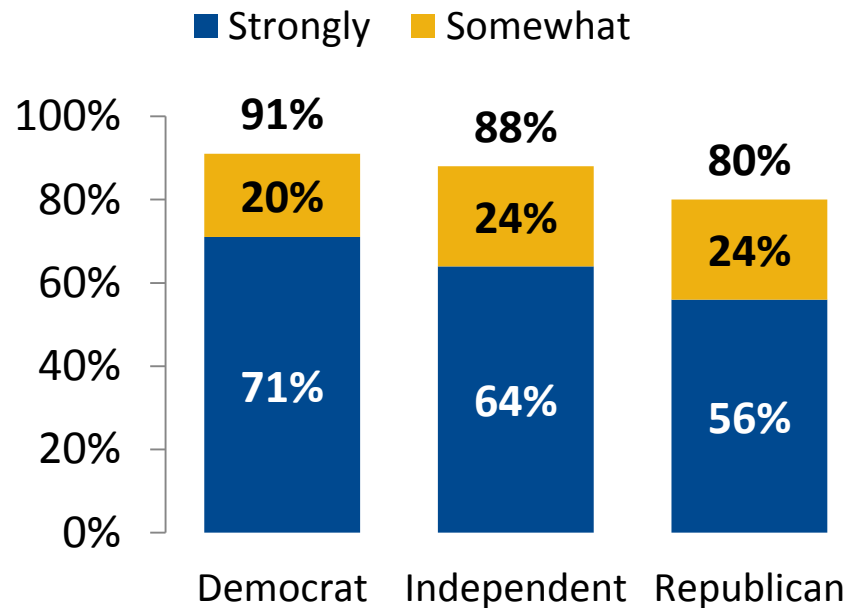
Should the federal government continue or reduce funding for Great Lakes restoration?



Enthusiasm for Great Lakes restoration is bipartisan.

Large majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents all support the federal government continuing to invest in Great Lakes restoration, with over half of each group saying they “strongly” support continuing restoration funding without cuts.

Support for continued restoration funding by party



Examples of restoration projects are seen as good uses of tax dollars.

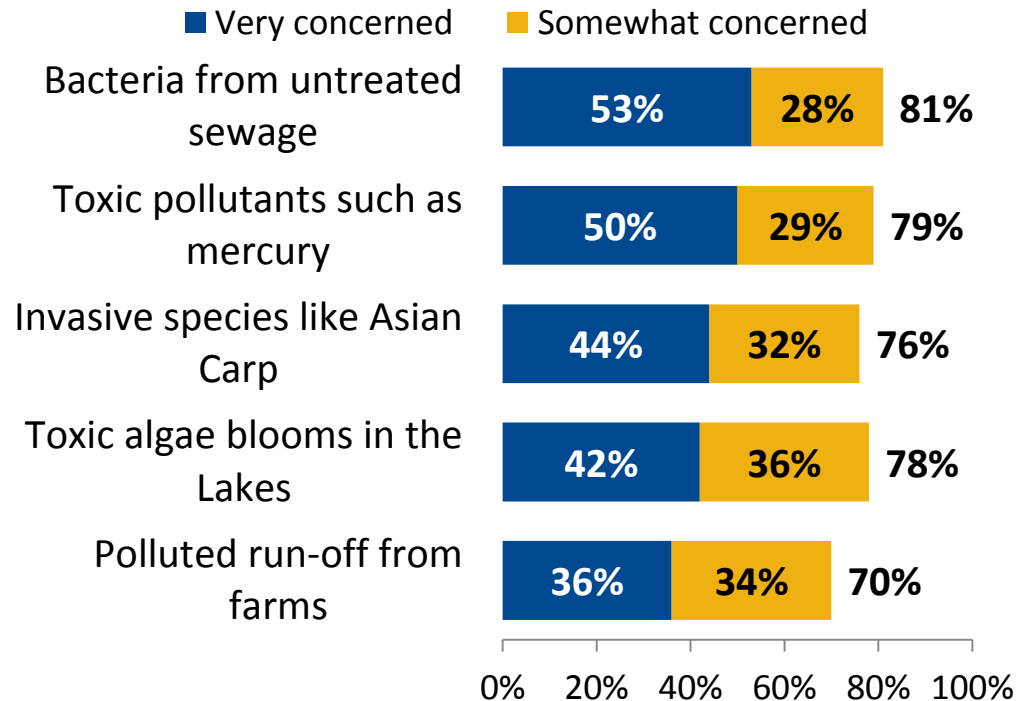
The survey presented three “examples of how federal tax dollars have been spent on improving the Great Lakes” and asked residents to rate them as excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor uses of federal tax dollars. Majorities rate all three as highly positive uses of federal money.

Example project	% “excellent/ good”
Cleaned up toxic contamination such as mercury from the mouth of the Ashtabula River near Cleveland, Ohio, which has made the area safe for fishing and boating again	81%
Restored a native dune habitat at a Lake Michigan beach north of Chicago, which improved water quality and allowed the beach to remain open for swimmers	76%
Removed concrete along the banks of the Kinnickinnic River in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and replaced it with natural vegetation	71%

Problems the public sees as most serious include toxic pollution and sewage.

Prompted with a series of threats to the Great Lakes, residents express high levels of worry about all of them, with large majorities very or somewhat concerned. “Bacteria from untreated sewage” and “toxic pollutants such as mercury” are viewed as especially concerning.

Concern about problems in Lakes

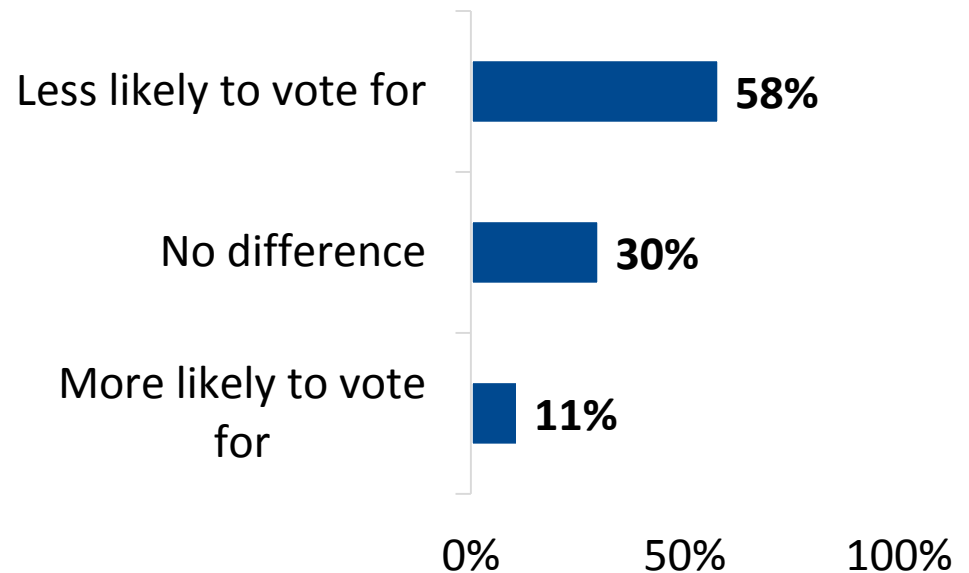


Restoration could be an important factor in Congressional elections.

If member of Congress voted for cuts to restoration programs

Among registered voters, N=676

A majority of registered voters (58%) across the region would be *less likely* to support a member of Congress who “voted to cut the funding for Great Lakes restoration” while only 11% would be more likely to support such a candidate.



And has the potential to be a voting issue in the Presidential election as well.

If a presidential candidate support cuts to restoration programs...

Among registered voters, N=691

If a candidate for President “promised to cut the funding for Great Lakes restoration,” a majority of registered voters would be less likely to support that person.

Less likely to vote for



No difference



More likely to vote for



0% 50% 100%

Contact Information

John Russonello
johnrussonello@brspoll.com

1724 20th St, NW, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20009

202.822.6090



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