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# Biden-Harris Administration invests more than \$3.7 million to enhance water level forecast system for the Great Lakes as part of Investing in America agenda

Funding from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will support NOAA's efforts to predict water levels a year in advance

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High water levels encroach on seawalls and lakeside property near the town of Oscoda, Michigan on Lake Huron. (Image credit: NOAA)

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Today, the Department of Commerce and NOAA announced \$3.72 million in funding to support research on Great Lakes water level forecasts as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#). These funds will be distributed by [NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory \(GLERL\)](#) to [NOAA's Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research \(CIGLR\)](#) [↗](#), hosted by the University of Michigan.

Water level forecasts are an important tool, used by many throughout the region for commerce, recreation and safety.

"The Great Lakes are an economic powerhouse supporting thousands of jobs in tourism, recreation and marine transportation, and they depend on adequate water levels to meet the needs of the region," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. "Thanks to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, this investment of over \$3 million will boost NOAA's efforts to study and predict water level forecasts and help communities plan ahead to minimize the impacts of flooding along the shoreline — all while addressing the regional challenges of climate change."

The use of current forecasts for decision-making has been historically limited due to large uncertainties in the rise and fall of anticipated water levels and the short time span of accurate predictions. Research to improve forecasts that provide increased confidence in water level changes could provide critical information to decision-makers, and support efforts to strengthen coastal resiliency.

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Changes in Great Lakes water levels impact commerce, shipping, tourism and the overall economies and livelihoods of coastal communities,” said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. “More than 27 million people live along the shoreline of the Great Lakes, and the region depends heavily on these huge bodies of water. These funds will help us better understand and anticipate water level changes, which often lead to severe flooding, and can have large impacts on so many towns, cities and states.”

This project is designed to improve seasonal water level forecasts using technology, like machine learning, to extend the forecasts from six months to one year in advance. The new advanced forecast will also enable researchers to see how global and regional climate patterns such as El Nino and La Nina affect the Great Lakes water levels. The results will help local and state-level leaders anticipate potential hazards.

Having a more accurate, long term advanced forecast will help communities plan and manage for changes in lake levels to reduce impacts and protect their citizens from flooding,” said Debbie Lee, Ph.D., GLERL director. “Commercial shipping companies, coastal residents, families out for a sail on the lake or a day at the beach — all kinds of people around the lakes want to know about water fluctuations. This will help them prepare for any hazards those fluctuations may cause.”

Visit NOAA’s [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website](#) to learn about current and future funding opportunities.

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