

Great Lakes cleanup may reap big benefits

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A Brookings Institution study suggested that restoring the health of the U.S. Great Lakes could create \$50 billion in economic benefit for the area.

The cost-benefit analysis showed efforts to improve the health of the Great Lakes -- beset by invasive species, sewage contamination toxic pollution and other threats -- would generate nearly two times the economic gains compared with such a project's cost.

"A tremendous opportunity exists to restore the lakes, reinvigorate the region's economy, and boost the competitiveness of the nation," said Robert Litan of the Kauffmann Foundation, a Brookings senior Fellow who led the study. "The report makes a compelling case for Congress to act now to restore the lakes by passing the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act."

The researchers determined the Great Lakes region could gain at least \$50 billion in long-term economic benefits from a restoration investment of \$26 billion. That's a net gain of at least \$24 billion from increases in tourism, the fishing industry, recreational activity and home values, the study said.

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