**Submitted: Pat Marida - March 30, 2026**

**Sharing Great Lakes Perspectives with the IJC**

In response to

IJC: Sharing Great Lakes Perspectives with the International Joint Commission

Comments due by 4-3-2026

https://glperspectives.ijc.org/en/share-your-great-lakes-perspectives

How have changes to Great Lakes water quality impacted the way you live, work, play and engage with the Great Lakes?

My father and his father were both born and raised on South Bass Island in Lake Erie. The house built by my great grandparents is still there. The resort town of Put-in-Bay is located on the island. Throughout my 84 years I have spent a lot of my summertime on the island.

The Clean Water Act made a big difference in bringing back walleye to the lake. As the shallowest of the lakes, Erie is the most sensitive to polluting runoff. My understanding is that the walleye population is starting to decrease now.

When I was a child, the mayflies (we called them June bugs) were so thick we had to use windshield wipers to drive around the island. They aggregated by the thousands on my grandmother's screen door. Now this important species in the fish food cycle are few. This seems like a big loss. My understanding is that starvation is a big factor in the decline of bird migration, and the decline of central insect species and unspoiled habitat are two factors. The island is part of an island chain that is one of the main migratory bird flyways from South America into Canada.

The island continues to develop, and their sewage treatment system is not able to handle the number of homes and businesses that are locating there. Pressure is increasing for more land development while laws governing discharges into the lake may or may not be being enforced.

The zebra mussels have invaded the island and there is now a shell beach on the east side of the island. There is a threat of Asian Carp moving from the Mississippi watershed into the Great Lakes watershed at Chicago. Shipping interests are lobbying to prevent the strengthening of the barrier between these watersheds.

If you had a magic wand, what would you change to achieve progress on Great Lakes water quality?

- Issues in the section above would be addressed and corrected.
- Radioactive discharges: My magic wand would put radioactive discharges into the lakes back under the purview of the International Joint Commission (IJC) as well as into other Great Lakes water quality boards including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)) and the Great Lakes Commission (GLC).Dredging: My magic want would make much stricter regulations on dredging in the Great Lakes.
- Fiduciary responsibility:  My magic wand would make Great Lakes Authority, I and other agencies accountable for money spent and actions taken such as eminent domain
- Promoting sustainable vs. unsustainable energy: Promoting unsustainable energy sources like oil, gas, and nuclear would be stopped. Renewable energy (by definition, once its infrastructure is build, the fuel is free) like wind, solar, hydro, tidal, an geothermal would be promoted, and encouraged.
- Toxic cyanobacterial algae blooms would be curtailed. Laws would be made and enforced to stop CAFOs, large animal farms, and even some smaller farms from spreading manure on Ohio's farmland in the winter. Larger farms would also be regulated during other times of the year. Concentrated animal farm sizes would be reduced. This would happen statewide in Ohio as well as in the Great Lakes watershed. Cities would not be saddled with expensive equipment to remove toxins added to the lake by unregulated polluters.
- Science, not politics: My magic wand would remove most elected and appointed officials from positions in Great Lakes water quality governance. More water quality experts would be in those positions representing science, not politics.
- People would stick together and educate ourselves so that we are able to communicate with and elect officials at local, state and federal levels who will represent the needs of people and communities - rather than the fiduciary wishes of Corporate America. Everyone deserves to have clean air, clean water, and healthy food. This means getting/having access to our public airwaves to spread the voices and concerns of We The People on the ground.

Three years from now, how do you hope changes to water quality will have changed the way you live, work, play and engage with the lakes?

I hope to still be here to enjoy camping and swimming in cleaner water at Put-in-Bay with my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.