



**Below is the [opening statement](#) of Chairman Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) as delivered.**

*“We’re going to discuss a priority of Senator Husted: the value of federal efforts to restore the Great Lakes. And I mentioned, I don’t have the Great Lakes in my state, but we have a lot of great lakes.*”

*“The health of the Great Lakes is important for achieving our nation’s environmental, public health and economic goals. Together, the five lakes make up the largest system of fresh surface water in the world and are a critical habitat for countless species. They also provide clean drinking water to millions of people in the United States and Canada.*”

*“The region and the country’s economies significantly benefit from the use of the Great Lakes to transport goods, the reliable supply of water for industrial and agricultural purposes and opportunities for tourism and recreational activities. These broad benefits are directly enhanced from efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes.*”

*“Great Lakes restoration efforts have been underway for decades. President Bush first established the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force by Executive Order in 2004.*”

*“Restoration efforts are implemented through various federal, state, local and private organizations, as well as through cooperative efforts with Canada. One of those key programs is the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, or GLRI.*

*“Congress created the GLRI in 2015 as a nonregulatory program to carry out restoration projects that may include ecosystem and habitat restoration, water quality improvement, education and research and local capacity building.*

*“The GLRI seeks to achieve these outcomes by minimizing and mitigating toxic substances, invasive species and nonpoint source pollution, as well as improving habitat and species management and laying the foundation for future restoration efforts.*

*“The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads the implementation and administration of the GLRI program and chairs the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, which is made up of 16 different federal agencies. Importantly, the 16 federal GLRI agencies work closely with the eight Great Lakes states, 35 Great Lakes tribes, local governments, universities and private partners to work to advance long-term restoration goals.*

*“The current authorization for the GLRI is set to expire at the end of September. Senator Husted and Senator Peters introduced S. 528, the GLRI Act of 2025, to reauthorize the program.*

*“As the EPW committee considers this legislation, this hearing is an opportunity to hear from stakeholders about what has been working well [with the GLRI], how the initiative has protected the environment, natural resources and public health, as well as enabled economic development in the region.*

*“Today’s witnesses can provide insights on opportunities to improve the initiative to ensure that federal resources are utilized for the most meaningful purposes. I look forward to learning about how the federal government partners with state*

*and local governments who best understand how to prioritize and address the needs in their own backyards.”*

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