

Toward Healthier Communities

Measuring human health as the climate and environment change

- The International Joint Commission (IJC) helps Canada and the United States prevent and resolve issues over shared waters on 5,525 miles of boundary, including the Great Lakes.
- The Great Lakes are experiencing climate-driven impacts such as extreme weather, which can affect water quality in ways that create hazards to human health.
- The IJC's **Health Professionals Advisory Board** identified a preliminary set of indicators for *Monitoring the Human Health Consequences of Climate Change in the Great Lakes*.

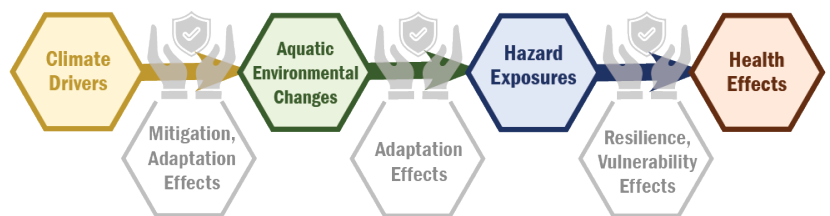
A Climate Checkup for Great Lakes Communities

Developing indicators of climate impacts on people's health where they live

The Great Lakes are a source of drinking water, recreation, food, commerce and well-being for 26 million residents and millions more visitors to the region.

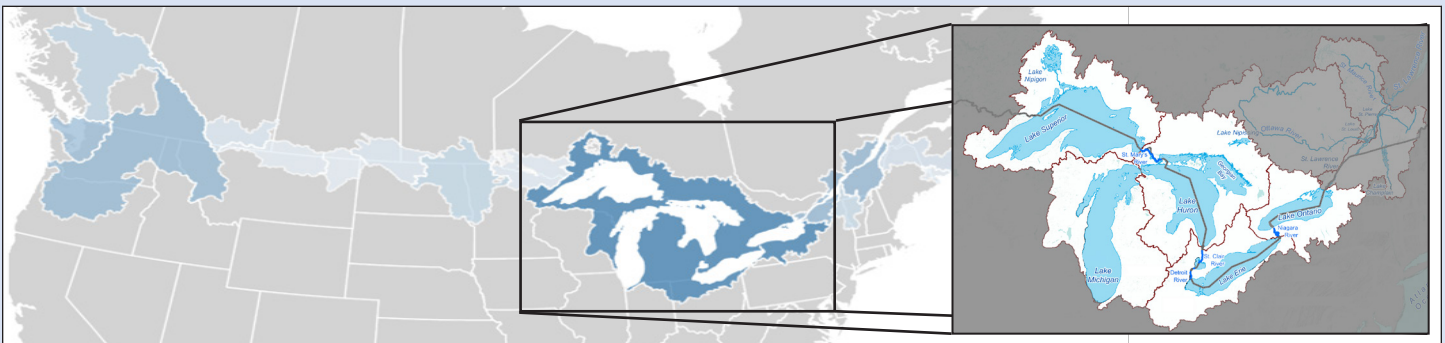
The region's climate is creating warmer, wetter and wilder weather. Resulting changes to the Great Lakes environment exposes the public to health hazards ranging from flooding, waterborne pathogen outbreaks, untreated sewage draining into waterways, toxins from algal blooms, drinking water advisories, beach closures and more. The potential for more human health impacts are on the rise as climate-driven environmental changes increase in severity.

The IJC Health Professionals Advisory Board's *Monitoring the Human Health Consequences of Climate Change in the Great Lakes* report suggests indicators to measure the complex interactions between climate-driven environmental changes, health hazard exposures and public health outcomes.



The board's report includes a conceptual framework describing the cascade of climate impacts on human health in Great Lakes communities.

Where will this work impact?



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Toward Indicators of Climate Impacts on Human Health

Health Professionals Advisory Board

The board's 2024 *Monitoring the Human Health Consequences of Climate Change in the Great Lakes* report:

- Identifies human health indicators related to climate-driven environmental change in the Great Lakes basin,
- Presents a conceptual model of the interactions between climate-driven environmental change and corresponding human health effects,
- Highlights the relationship of international water management to health and climate resilience, and
- Suggests how such indicators could supplement current monitoring and tracking systems.

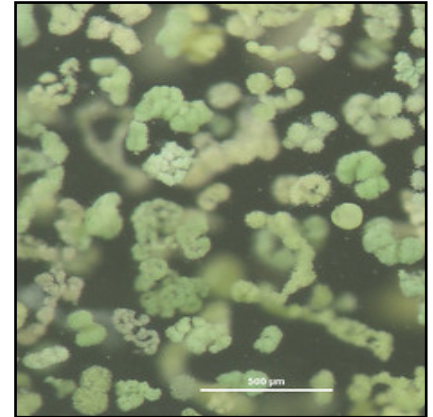
Contact the IJC about this project: rajesh.bejankiwar@ijc.org

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

The Health Professionals Advisory Board assists the IJC in its responsibilities to regularly report on the status of the Great Lakes and other boundary waters and for investigating the risk to ecosystems and human health that may result from current or future stressors. The goal of this report is to help improve the identification of climate-driven human health risks.

About the International Joint Commission

The IJC was established in 1909 under the Boundary Waters Treaty to help Canada and the United States prevent and resolve disputes over shared waters. The IJC's responsibilities include reporting on progress made by the governments under the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The Health Professionals Advisory Board assists the IJC and its boards by providing advice on clinical and public health issues related to the transboundary environment.



Microcystis algae, the most common bloom-forming genus of freshwater cyanobacteria, under a microscope. Credit: NOAA GLERL

Scan for more about this project!



The Great Lakes ...



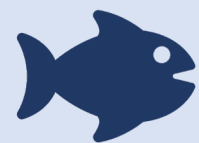
contain roughly
20 percent of the world's
fresh surface water



support a
US\$6 trillion (CAD\$7.5
trillion) regional economy



are a source of
drinking water for
36 million people



are home to
4,000 species of
plants and animals



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