

GET INVOLVED: LEARN ABOUT THE ELECTED OFFICES ON THE BALLOT

Elected officials set program and funding priorities that can lead to better protections for the lakes or leave them more vulnerable to pollution. They oversee agencies that implement clean water laws and regulations. And they make budget decisions that impact Great Lakes programs.

In 2022, many federal, state, and local offices are on the ballot around the Great Lakes region. Seven Great Lakes states – New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin – have gubernatorial elections. Five states have U.S. Senate races on the ballot. All seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for election in the fall. And numerous state and local offices are on the ballot.

While federal and state office holders and agencies have significant influence on the health of the Great Lakes, your local mayor, city council members, and state house representatives can have enormous impact on local environmental issues. They oversee agencies that implement clean water laws and regulations, like those set by local environmental departments. And, agencies make budget decisions that impact your drinking water quality or your water bills.

Research the elected offices on the ballot. The list of local elected offices sometimes seems incomprehensible. But, understanding local offices and their role(s) can help you make informed choices on issues you care about. For instance, a city comptroller is essentially the city's chief financial officer and can have major influence over how local governments spends taxpayer dollars. Knowing the role(s) elected officials play can help you ask informed questions. You can find out about the elected offices that will appear on your ballot by visiting our Great Lakes Voter Information Center at www.greatlakes.org/VoterInfo

Connect the dots between the issue you care about, the agency responsible, and the public office holder who has the most influence on that agency. Some quick detective work through searching the webpages of your local city or village, as well as drinking water, stormwater, and sewage treatment service providers, will describe which office holders are responsible for those agencies and their budgets.

After you have identified the local issue you care about and the candidates who are seeking offices that influence that issue, engage them on the issue. For instance, if you are concerned about rising water and sewer bills, your local water and sewer district sets the rates, but your mayor or city council may have influence over those decisions.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Alliance for the Great Lakes cannot support or oppose candidates or political parties. However, we can, and do, educate candidates and voters on Great Lakes issues.

