



Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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JB Pritzker, Governor

James Jennings, Acting Director

August 28, 2025

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois

Honorable Members of the 104th
General Assembly, State of Illinois

Honorable JB Pritzker and Members of the 104th General Assembly:

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency presents a biennial Executive Summary on the conditions of water quality in Lake Michigan. This summary is mandated per the reporting requirements in Section 5 of the Illinois Rivers, Lakes, and Streams Act [615 ILCS 5/14 (a)]. This Executive Summary is generated from the Agency's 2024 Integrated Report.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency regularly monitors water quality from nearshore, harbors, and public water supply intakes in Lake Michigan and reports on the conditions of the water quality in the Agency's biennial Integrated Report. The 2024 Integrated Report is based on federal guidance to meet the requirements of Sections 305(b), 303(d) and 314 of the federal Clean Water Act. The purpose of the Integrated Report is to provide information to the federal government and the citizens of Illinois on the condition of surface water in the state. The entire 2024 and previous Integrated Reports can be found on the Agency's website at [303d list](#).

Sincerely,

James Jennings
Acting Director
Environmental Protection Agency





Executive Summary of Lake Michigan Water Quality Conditions

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) works to ensure Illinois rivers, streams, and lakes are supporting uses for which they are designated through monitoring and assessment activities. Designated uses include protection of aquatic life, primary contact recreation, aesthetic quality, public and food water processing supply, and fish consumption.

Illinois EPA determines the attainment status of designated uses for waterbodies through assessments which conclude one of two possible use support levels: “Fully Supporting” or “Not Supporting.” Fully Supporting means the designated use for that waterbody is attained. Not Supporting means the designated use is not attained. Waterbodies determined to be Not Supporting for one or more designated uses are called “impaired”. For each impaired use, Illinois EPA will identify the potential cause(s) of the impairment.

Monitoring and assessment of Illinois waterbodies is conducted pursuant to the requirements in Section 305(b) and 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act. Assessment results are reported biennially in the Integrated Report which is available on the Illinois EPA’s website. For Lake Michigan, Illinois EPA monitors and assesses the quality of three water types: Open Waters, Harbors, and Shoreline. Below is summary of Lake Michigan designated use assessment results as reported in the 2024 Integrated Report.

The 196 square miles of Lake Michigan nearshore open waters are fully supporting for aquatic life, primary contact, and public and food processing water supply use. Aesthetic quality and fish consumption are not supporting. The potential cause of impairment for aesthetic quality is phosphorus; while mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls are impairing fish consumption.

Eight (8) harbors were assessed as fully supporting for aesthetic quality and primary contact and not supporting for aquatic life and fish consumption. The potential cause of impairment for aquatic life is temperature, while mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls are impairing fish consumption. The 64 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline were assessed as not supporting for primary contact and fish consumption. The potential cause of impairment for primary contact is *E. coli* bacteria; while mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls are impairing fish consumption.

**Designated Use Support Status for Lake Michigan: Nearshore Open Waters, Harbors,
and Shoreline as reported in the 2024 Biennial Integrated Report.**

Nearshore Open Waters (196 Square Miles)

Designated Use	Fully Supporting	Not Supporting	Potential Cause of Impairment
Aesthetic Quality	0	196	Phosphorus
Aquatic Life	196	0	-
Fish Consumption	0	196	Mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
Primary Contact	196	0	-
Public and Food Processing Water Supply	196	0	-

Harbors (8 Harbors = 1.15 Square Mile)

Designated Use	Fully Supporting	Not Supporting	Potential Cause of Impairment
Aesthetic Quality	1.15	0.00	-
Aquatic Life	1.03	0.12	Temperature
Fish Consumption	0.00	0.35	Mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
Primary Contact	1.15	0.00	-

Shoreline (64 Miles)

Designated Use	Fully Supporting	Not Supporting	Potential Cause of Impairment
Fish Consumption	0.0	64.0	Mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
Primary Contact	16.3	47.7	E-Coli