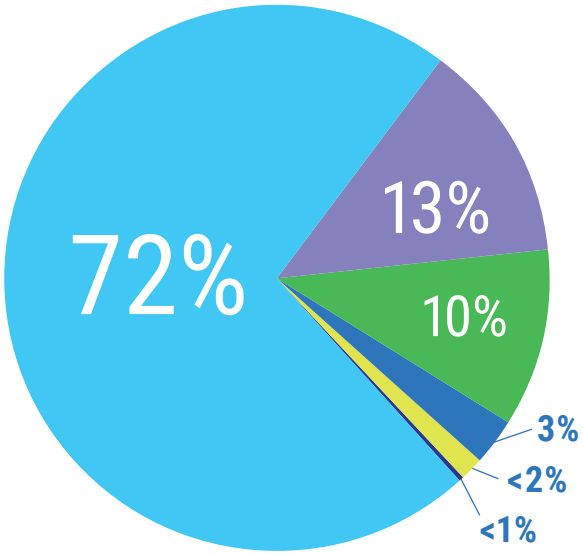
Great Lakes Water Use

Water use fluctuates from year to year, most often due to variable weather. In 2019, the total reported water withdrawal from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin was **38.9** billion gallons a day or **147.1** billion liters per day. These numbers include groundwater and surface water withdrawals, but do not include in-stream hydroelectric power production.



72% of water use was associated with generating electrical power — to generate steam or in cooling systems for thermoelectric power production and in off-stream hydroelectric power production.

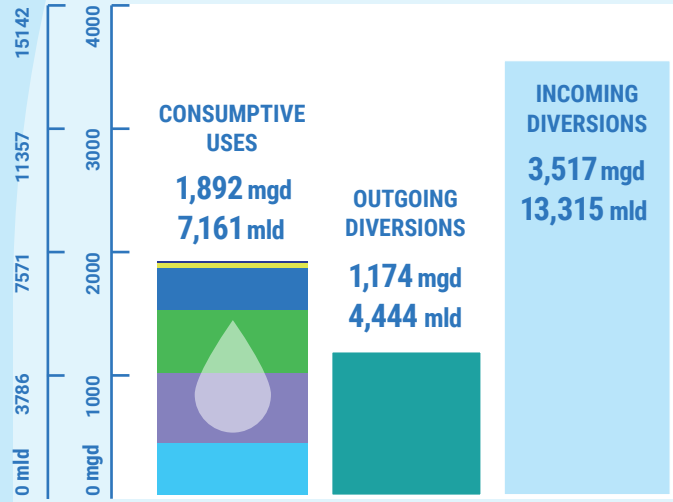
13% of water use was for public water supply by cities and villages. In addition to residential water use, public water supply also includes commercial, institutional, and industrial users that are connected to a municipality's public system.

10% of water use was for industrial facilities that have their own water supply system (water purchased from the public water system used for industrial purposes included under public water supply)

Nearly **3% of water use was for other self supply,** which includes withdrawals to maintain water levels for navigation, creation/enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality purposes.

Under 2% of water use was for agriculture, including irrigation, livestock, and fish hatcheries. While this is small overall, these withdrawals are often groundwater withdrawals and may have high consumptive use, so can be significant at a local watershed scale.

Less than 1% of water use was associated with dedicated systems at **commercial and institutional facilities.**



The amount of water used in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin per day would fill 58,381 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Most of the water used is returned to the basin.

Less than five percent of water withdrawn is lost through consumptive uses, which are not proportionate to water use by sector — evident when comparing the chart on the left to the chart above.

Additionally, some water leaves the basin through outgoing diversions. Incoming diversions bring water into the basin from other watersheds.

452 MILLION GALLONS A DAY

or 1,710 million liters a day! That's how much more water is diverted into the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin than is diverted out or consumed every day!

Source: Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database (https://waterusedata.glc.org). Data submitted by states and provinces in accordance with protocols under the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement.