



## Overview

Through the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the region is now setting the pace in the global marketplace and protecting the world's largest single source of fresh water.

### History

The Council of Great Lakes Governors was formed in 1983 by the Governors of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin to serve as a forum for the development of regional agreements between the Great Lakes Governors on issues of common concern. In 1989, the Council Governors were joined by the Governors of New York and Pennsylvania.

#### The Beginning of the Council: Environmental Stewardship

The central issue of common concern for all of the Governors was the protection and management of the waters of the Great Lakes. As the primary source of freshwater for the region as well as a superhighway that connected the region to the world, proper management of the lakes was crucial to the health of the residents of the Great Lakes region as well as the continued growth of the region's economy. Consequently, coordinating Great Lakes regional water policy was the original impetus for the creation of the Council. As a result of the first Council projects, the Governors joined with the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec and signed the Great Lakes Charter of 1985, a good faith agreement to collectively manage Great Lakes water uses to make certain that the levels and flows of Great Lakes water was not unduly disrupted.

The Governors then tackled the issue of improving Great Lakes water quality. In 1986, the Governors signed the Toxic Substances Control Agreement (TSCA). The agreement directly led to the formation of the Great Lakes Protection Fund in 1989 during the chairmanship of Wisconsin Governor Tommy G. Thompson. The Fund was the first multi-state foundation dedicated to improving the environment.

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The TSCA also led indirectly to the U.S. EPA's Great Lakes Water Quality Initiative in the early 1990's, which set the regulatory structure for new water quality regulations. The Governors coordinated their efforts through the Council when working with the U.S. EPA to ensure that new state water quality regulations were flexible, more effective and were compatible with the new economy that was beginning to grow in the Great Lakes region. To this end, the Council, under the chairmanship of Ohio Governor George V. Voinovich, sponsored a study performed by DRI/McGraw-Hill to evaluate the environmental- and cost-effectiveness of the draft water quality guidance created by the U.S. EPA. Through the collective effort of the Governors and the conclusions reached in this study, the final guidance issued by U.S. EPA included favorable language for the Great Lakes States.

### The Council Continues to Grow: Economic Development

In the late 1980's, the effectiveness of the Council as a tool for addressing issues of collective concern became more apparent and the Governors recognized that the health of the environment and the health of the economy were closely related. They further recognized that these collective concerns could be addressed not only through agreements between the States, but also through cooperative projects that conclude with a new regional approach to address an issue of concern.

The Governors combined their early economic activities for improving the regional economy into their 1988 Economic Development Agreement. This agreement, formulated during the chairmanship of Ohio Governor Richard Celeste, outlined basic principles for the development of the Great Lakes region and had the benefit of all of its citizens at its core. This Economic Development Agreement marked the change in the Council's orientation from an agreement-based to a project-based organization. In 1989, under Governor Tommy Thompson's chairmanship, the Economic Development Agreement led directly to the creation of the Great Lakes of North America, an on-going effort to market the region as a whole to tourists from the United Kingdom and Germany. The agreement also led to the 1990 opening of the first-ever multi-state trade office in Toronto, Canada. The purpose of this new shared trade office was to promote exports from the region's small- and medium-sized companies and to reduce the costs to the member states of operating an overseas trade office. Based upon the success of the Canadian shared trade office, then Chairman Governor Ridge encouraged the Governors to open shared trade offices in Brazil (opened in 1997), Chile (opened in 1998), Argentina (opened in 1999), South Africa (opened in 1999), Australia (opened 2002) and China (opened 2003).

In addition, under the chairmanship of then Governor Voinovich of Ohio, the Governors sponsored a 1992 study by Carnegie Mellon University that provided a

foundation for the development of an integrated long-term strategic plan for the Great Lakes region's economic and environmental health. Several projects were born out of this study. One project, the Great Lakes Guarantee, encouraged the use of regionally certified skill standards and has led to over 1000 Great Lakes workers being certified as having world-class metalworking skills.

Between 1992 and 2002 leadership continued at the Council under Governor Voinovich and Michigan Governor John Engler. They focused their attention on pollution prevention by working with printing companies to identify strategies to reduce pollution in the printing process and certify them as Great Printers (the Great Printers Project). At the same time, the Council worked with the auto industry to reduce the release of contaminants throughout the auto supply chain (the Auto Project). Under the chairmanship of Governor Engler, the Governors combined their market purchasing power to encourage the development of the recycled product industry by working together to develop common specifications for state-purchased products made from recycled material (Great Lakes Recycle).

In 1996, under the direction of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, the Governors decided that in keeping with their initiatives to prevent pollution, develop new forms of environmental regulations, and ensure that the regional economy is competitive, there was a need to address the legacy of the old economy by working together to encourage the clean-up and redevelopment of brownfields throughout the region (Brownfields Project). A Blueprint for Brownfield Redevelopment, the publication that emerged out of this project, provided both information and strategic advice to help all interested parties break through the remaining barriers to brownfield redevelopment.

It was during this project that Governor Ridge recognized the great benefit of the Premiers' participation in Council initiatives. The Premiers are now active associate members of the Council and add a great deal to our work. A perfect example of the strong working relationship of the Governors and Premiers is the 18-month development and ultimate signing of the Great Lakes Charter Annex in June of 2001. The Charter Annex provides a blueprint for the creation of a new set of agreements among the States and Provinces on the effective management of Great Lakes water resources. It also outlines a series of principles for reviewing water withdrawals from the Great Lakes Basin that is grounded in protecting, conserving, restoring, and improving the Great Lakes ecosystem. A Governors and Premiers Working Group completed first drafts of the Annex implementing agreements, which were released for public comment on July 19, 2004. After revisions were made based on comments received, a second draft of the Annex implementing agreements were released for public comment on June 30, 2005. During the public comment periods, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the Great Lakes States,

Ontario and Québec held over 30 public meetings throughout the region and received more than 13,000 written comments.

On December 13, 2005, the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers signed agreements at the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Leadership Summit that will provide unprecedented protections for the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin.

The agreements include the following:

1. The Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (the Agreement), a good-faith agreement among the Great Lakes States, Ontario and Québec; that will be implemented in Ontario and Québec through Provincial laws, and in the States, through
2. The Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (the Compact), an agreement among the Great Lakes States that was passed into law through an interstate compact.

On October 3, 2008 President George W. Bush signed a joint resolution of Congress providing consent to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The President's action marked the final step in the Compact's approval process thus enabling these historic protections to become law. The effective date of the Compact is December 8, 2008.

#### The Current Council of Great Lakes Governors

The Council's mission continues to evolve under the Chairmanship of Governor Jim Doyle of Wisconsin. The Governors are working with their respective legislatures to turn the Compact into law, while the Premiers are also taking steps to implement the promises made in the Agreement into law.

In 2002, Governor Taft also called for the creation of a Great Lakes Governors Priorities Initiative. Through the Initiative, the Council of Great Lakes Governors has established a list of nine priorities to guide the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes. And in May of 2004, the President signed an Executive Order calling for a "Regional Collaboration of National Significance." Through the resulting Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, the Governors in partnership with members of Congress, the Administration, Mayors, Tribal leaders and non-governmental participants developed a comprehensive Great Lakes restoration and protection strategy for the Great Lakes that was released on December 12, 2005. This strategy used the Governors' priorities as its organizing principle.

Also in 2002, a project on managing aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes was initiated. As Council Chair, Governor Doyle wants to ensure the threat of aquatic invasive species does not go unchecked. Also, during these difficult economic times in the region and throughout the country, Governor Doyle is committed to the continued success of the Council's regional tourism initiative (The Great Lakes of North America Initiative) and the six shared trade offices. These offices allow two or more States to retain their investment in markets at a time when they have to cut back on overseas office expenses.

These ongoing projects and initiatives represent the Great Lakes Governors' long history of bipartisan commitment to the environmental stewardship and economic development of the Great Lakes region.

## **Council Chairs**

2005- Jim Doyle, D-Wisconsin

2004-2005 Jim Doyle, D-Wisconsin  
Bob Taft, R-Ohio

2001 – 2004 Bob Taft, R-Ohio

1996 – 2001 Tom Ridge, R-Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup>

1994 – 1996 John Engler, R-Michigan

1992 – 1994 George V. Voinovich, R-Ohio

1989 – 1992 Tommy G. Thompson, R-Wisconsin<sup>2</sup>

1989 – 1989 Richard Celeste, D-Ohio

1987 – 1989 James R. Thompson, R-Illinois

1985 – 1987 Anthony Earl, D-Wisconsin<sup>3</sup>

1983 – 1985 Rudy Perpich, D-Minnesota

<sup>1</sup> Governor Ridge was re-elected to a second term in 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Michigan Governor Blanchard had been slated to become the new Chairman in 1991 but was defeated in 1990 by Governor Engler. With several new Governors entering office, Governor Thompson agreed to

serve one extra year to help transition the new Governors more directly into the Council activities.

3 Governor Earl was defeated by Governor Thompson and was unable to complete his term as Chairman



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