



Governors and Premiers Support Law Enforcement Efforts to Hold Invasive Species Offenders Accountable

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers today announced broadened membership to a powerful instrument that can help investigations of violators of aquatic invasive species laws. All ten of the region's States and Provinces have now joined the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Regional Cooperative Enforcement Operations. This MOU facilitates information sharing and cross-jurisdictional investigations and is an essential tool for law enforcement officials to act on AIS and other wildlife offenses. By encouraging all ten of the region's States and Provinces to join this agreement, the Governors and Premiers have demonstrated their support to further deter illegal possession, sale and transportation of invasive species like Asian carp.

Today's action is the latest in a series of measures led by the Governors and Premiers to combat invasive species. These species cost the U.S. and Canada billions of dollars in damages each year, are a burden on the economy, and strain state, provincial and federal budgets.

Previously, the Governors and Premiers identified the 21 "least wanted" non-native species that pose a particularly high risk to the region. In recent years, the States and Provinces have taken more than 50 separate actions against these fish, plants, and invertebrates. The Governors and Premiers have also enacted a mutual aid agreement to ensure that the region's States and Provinces can collectively combat an invasion by these or other invasive species. Regular, regional exercises ensure that officials are prepared.

Aquatic invasive species pose a threat to human health and cause immeasurable ecological damage to native species, with consequences for our region's sport and commercial fisheries, tourism and recreation. More than 180 nonnative species have been introduced into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Stopping the further spread of these species, and the introduction of new ones, is one of the Governors' and Premiers' top priorities.

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The Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers unites the chief executives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. The Governors and Premiers work as equal partners to grow the region's \$6 trillion economy and protect the world's largest system of surface fresh water. www.gsgp.org