Co-Chair’s Letter

Last month I joined with my fellow co-chair, Governor Quinn of Illinois, to convene the Council of Great Lakes Governors in Chicago. This meeting builds on the historic summit that we hosted last year on Mackinac Island. That summit set the stage for us to work together for the benefit of all our citizens. We are now accelerating our progress and advancing our entire region.

I am particularly pleased with our continued work to combat aquatic invasive species. The threat of aquatic invasive species transcends borders, and the mutual aid agreement we signed in Chicago allows us to address this threat through collaboration and cooperation.

We also committed to taking bold steps to improve our competitiveness in the global economy and create jobs. We launched a major new initiative with the Paulson Institute to attract international investment to our region’s manufacturing. Secretary Paulson and I will host a joint “Competitiveness Forum” in Michigan, and we will announce further actions in coming months.

To promote regional exports, the Council of Great Lakes Governors will be leading four multi-State trade missions to some of the world’s most dynamic markets. Our Maritime Task Force is also helping us to build and maintain our ports, harbors and related infrastructure. Of course, our maritime system is a critical piece of our transportation network—connecting us to the global economy.

At the Mackinac Island Summit, our theme was “Strengthening our Economy and Protecting Our Great Lakes.” We are now “Accelerating Progress.” Thank you for your partnership as we move forward together.

— Rick Snyder
Co-Chair, Council of Great Lakes Governors
Governor, State of Michigan

Governors and Premiers Jumpstart Regional Economy and Environmental Protection

On April 25-26, the Great Lakes Governors and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec gathered at Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium for the Council of Great Lakes Governors 2014 Executive Meeting. The meeting’s theme was “Accelerating Progress,” following up on last year’s breakthrough summit on Mackinac Island, Michigan. In Chicago, the Governors and Premiers announced a series of actions to further enhance our region’s competitiveness and better protect our environment.

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Co-Chairs of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, hosted the event and were joined by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. Senior representatives of Indiana Governor Mike Pence; Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton; New York Governor Andrew Cuomo; Ohio Governor John Kasich;
Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne; Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett; and, Québec Premier Philippe Couillard were also present and participated on their behalf during the meeting’s events.

The Governors and Premiers continue to work collaboratively with one another, and with other partners, toward their shared goals. During the meeting, a number of leaders spoke about how to collaboratively “accelerate progress” including:

- The Honorable Hank Paulson, former U.S. Treasury Secretary and Chairman of The Paulson Institute
- The Honorable Lisa Raitt, Canadian Minister of Transport
- The Honorable Gary Doer, Canadian Ambassador to the U.S.
- The Honorable Bruce Heyman, United States Ambassador to Canada
- David Jacobson, former U.S. Ambassador to Canada and Vice Chair, BMO Capital Markets
- Ellen Alberding, President, The Joyce Foundation
- Mark Pathy, President and Co-CEO, Fednav
- Ted Beattie, President and CEO of the Shedd Aquarium

“The Great Lakes are part of our states’ identities and bring regions and nations together,” Governor Quinn, Council of Great Lakes Governors Co-Chair said. “We may come from different shorelines, but challenges go beyond our borders. As leaders of the region, we come together as ‘champions’ for our beloved Great Lakes.”

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Council of Great Lakes Governors Co-Chair, said “Our meeting on Mackinac Island last year set the stage for the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers to better work together for the benefit of all our citizens. We are accelerating our progress with this meeting in Chicago, and look forward to continuing to work across borders to advance our region as a whole.”

COUNCIL OF GREAT LAKES GOVERNORS EXECUTIVE MEETING ACTIONS:

- Launching a comprehensive strategy to improve the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transport system and better integrate it into the multi-modal transportation system
- Creating an investment initiative to attract international investment to manufacturing in the Great Lakes region
- Signing a mutual aid agreement to combat the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, including the Asian carp
- Taking executives from regional small and medium sized businesses to four exciting markets, including East Africa, Eastern Europe, Mexico and Québec
- Improving water monitoring across the Basin
The Council will lead four multi-sector trade missions in 2014-2015 to assist small and medium sized regional businesses to expand their product sales and services. Missions will visit:

- Eastern Europe (Prague, Warsaw and Istanbul) November 3-13, 2014
- Mexico (Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara) March 1-7, 2015
- East Africa (Nairobi and Dar es Salaam) May 11-16, 2015
- Québec (Montreal and Québec City) June 15-17, 2015

The Québec mission will be held in conjunction with the Council’s Leadership Summit on June 12-14, 2015 in Québec City.

Mission participants will receive a customized appointment schedule to meet with prospective buyers, distributors, agents and interested parties. Participants also will benefit from networking events, briefings and logistical support.

Jeremy Sizer and Jodi Boldenow, owners of Industrial Door Co. Inc. from Minnesota, participated in the recent Council Trade Mission to South America.

“The trade mission was simply outstanding. All three countries we visited were very productive from a business standpoint. The potential customers that the Council set up for us to meet were exactly the type of customers we want to do business with.”

For more information on the trade missions please click http://www.cglg.org/projects/trade/TradeMissions.asp.
Mutual Aid Agreement Targets AIS Threat

On April 26, the Great Lakes Governors and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec announced a Mutual Aid Agreement that will empower the States and Provinces to act collaboratively and share staff and expertise in the event of a serious regional threat from aquatic invasive species (AIS). This innovative agreement provides the States and Provinces with a powerful tool to combat the introduction and spread of aquatic invaders including Asian carp.

The Mutual Aid Agreement is the first of its kind in the world, and is designed to:

- Prevent the introduction and spread of AIS;
- Foster mutual aid among the State and Provinces to respond to serious threats to the Basin from AIS; and,
- Encourage further cooperative actions by the States and Provinces to combat AIS.

Already, the States and Provinces are collaborating under the Mutual Aid Agreement. On May 27-29, Illinois and Indiana will lead a joint exercise in Lake Michigan’s Calumet Harbor. Michigan and Ohio will lead a similar exercise later this year.

Chicago Hosts IPW 2014

IPW, the largest international travel trade show in the United States, was held in Chicago on April 5-9 with one of the largest attendances in its history. Many Great Lakes exhibitors showcased their products, including the Illinois booth with a spectacular and unique Abraham Lincoln themed Harley-Davidson motorcycle promoting historic U.S. Route 66. Following the convention, Illinois and Great Lakes USA hosted nine familiarization tours where more than 200 tour operators and media experienced the region first hand. IPW is hosted by the U. S. Travel Association.