Chair’s Letter

Through the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, our region’s chief executives are working together to create the future. We are delighted to welcome Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb to the Conference, and we’re eager to work with him on our shared agenda. Governor Holcomb took office in January, replacing former Governor Mike Pence, who was sworn in as Vice President of the United States.

We are finding common ground so that we can move forward as a competitive, integrated regional economy. Our trade partnership recently opened its eleventh foreign trade office. Overall, our network now covers more than 80 countries, connecting our region’s exporters with customers around the globe.

We continue to strengthen our regional transportation systems through our shared work to implement our maritime strategy. Each State and Province has already taken important actions, and this work is accelerating. Momentum is also growing for critical federal projects like building a second Soo lock and, separately, a system-wide analysis of bottlenecks.

Our partnership is creating tangible results, and we can accomplish much more by continuing to work together toward our shared goals. Thank you for supporting this important work.

—Rick Snyder
Chair, Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers
Governor, State of Michigan

Conference Trade Program Expands to 84 Countries

The Conference recently celebrated the opening of its 11th international trade office. The Arab Gulf Trade Office, located in Dubai, will assist small and medium enterprises from the US Great Lakes region to export to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, and host visiting delegations for trade missions and regional trade shows. Managed by Channels, the office has expertise in aerospace, education, healthcare, alternative energy, transportation/infrastructure, oil & gas, ICT, food & agriculture, and retail. The Arab Gulf Trade Office extends the Conference’s global market reach to 84 countries on six continents.

For more information on the Conference’s Trade Offices, please click HERE.
Governors and Premiers Press

Federal Maritime Priorities

The Governors and Premiers continue to lead the region’s collaboration to rejuvenate the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System (MTS). Included among the nearly 40 actions in the regional MTS strategy are a series of steps to be taken by the US and Canadian federal governments. Targeted federal investments and policy changes can boost the competitiveness of the MTS, and help meet the strategy’s goals of doubling maritime trade, shrinking the environmental impact of the region’s transportation network and supporting the region’s industrial core. Near-term federal priorities include:

★ ENSURE THE FUNCTIONALITY OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT
  • Construct a second “Poe Class” Lock to ensure the movement of vital raw materials through the Soo Locks. In the meantime, accelerate the asset renewal program to ensure system performance.
  • Invest in port and modal connectivity infrastructure to enhance system competitiveness and efficiency.

★ ELIMINATE SYSTEM CONSTRAINTS AND BOTTLENECKS
  • Conduct a comprehensive, system-wide analysis of constraints and bottlenecks to ensure the efficient use of public and private resources in maintaining the system.
  • Allocate funding to eliminate the $200 million backlog needed to ensure functional depth of MTS channels and harbors.
  • Maintain and improve MTS icebreaking capacity and efficiency through better binational coordination, funding for new icebreakers, and strategic management of the MTS as a single system for icebreaking.

★ EXPEDITE THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PEOPLE ACROSS THE US-CANADA BORDER
  • Streamline the cross-border movement of maritime cargo and passengers. Policies such as “pre-clearance” programs for land-based cargo and “open jaw” programs for passengers should be considered.

★ REFORM PILOTAGE
  • The two governments should collaborate to convene a facilitated process to review and develop recommended changes to the pilotage service delivery structure.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Task Force Aims to Grow Regional Economy

The Governors’ and Premiers’ Economic Task Force, launched in June 2016, is developing recommendations to grow the region’s $5.8 trillion economy. Chaired by Ohio Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor, the Task Force is focusing on four near-term actions:

• Further analyzing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence regional economy;
• Boosting labor productivity in the region;
• Supporting key economic clusters; and,
• Working to ease cross-border trade.

The Task Force plans a series of major announcements in conjunction with the Governors’ and Premiers’ Leadership Summit later this year. The Summit will be held in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, from October 20-22.

The Conference’s first regional economic report, completed last year with BMO Capital Markets, can be found HERE.

TOURISM

Great Lakes USA Hosts Winter Media Tour

Great Lakes USA hosted a winter media familiarization tour in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Participants from Germany and the United Kingdom took part in activities including dog sledding, snow mobiling, hiking, snow tubing, ice fishing, and shopping at Mall of America. The group also visited the new Prince mural and tour the newly opened Paisley Park, Prince’s private estate and production complex. Further information on Great Lakes USA is available HERE.