CHAIR’S LETTER

After many years of hard work by the region’s Governors, Premiers and partners, momentum is building to fix the Soo Locks—the linchpin of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway system.

Political consensus is growing. President Donald Trump recently called on Congress to fix the Soo Locks. Michigan leaders have identified roughly $50 million to help jumpstart construction. President Trump has stated publicly that large-scale infrastructure projects leveraging non-federal investments will be given priority.

At the same time, years of hard work are paying off as practical obstacles fall. On June 29, the Army Corps of Engineers released a new study that improves the benefit-cost ratio for building a new lock and stresses the economic consequences of not fixing the vital shipping corridor.

The Soo Locks allow freighters to carry critical supplies that fuel the North American economy. For example, all of the iron ore mined in the United States runs through the Soo Locks and a six-month shutdown for any reason would result in an estimated 11 million lost jobs nationwide. The significance of this project cannot be overstated.

The Soo Locks are in desperate need of repair and only Congress and the US federal government can allocate the money to fix them. Congress has authorized the lock rebuild but, unfortunately, has not appropriated the funding needed to execute the project. Working together with regional leaders, Congress and the Administration, we can build on our recent progress and push this project over the finish line!

—Rick Snyder
Chair, Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers

GOVERNORS & PREMIERS ADD FIVE AIS TO “LEAST WANTED” LIST

On May 4, the Governors and Premiers announced five additions to the list of “least wanted” aquatic invasive species. Since 2013, the States and Provinces have taken more than 40 actions to prohibit or restrict these high-risk AIS, including the Asian carp. The new “least wanted” species include:

- Tench Tinca tinca
- Marmorkreb (marbled crayfish) Procambarus fallax forma virginalis
- New Zealand mud snail Potamopyrgus antipodarum
- European frogbit Hydrocharis morsus-ranae
- Yellow floating heart Nymphoides peltata

Also, in June, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources led an interjurisdictional Grass Carp Planned Response in the Sandusky River. Ohio used the Governors’ and Premiers’ Mutual Aid Agreement to collaborate with Michigan, Ontario, Québec and other regional partners on this exercise.
REGIO NAL MARITIME LEADERS MEET IN OTTAWA

The Governors and Premiers convened the first Great Lakes St. Lawrence Maritime Day in Ottawa, Ontario, on April 18-19. This event brought together representatives from the States and Provinces, the Canadian and US federal governments, industry, and other regional stakeholders. Participants discussed a variety of topics including trade corridors, system management, and new technologies including smart ships and automated locks. The Governors and Premiers plan to hold Maritime Days in the US and Canada again in the coming year.

In July, Wisconsin became co-chair of the Governors’ and Premiers’ Maritime Initiative, along with Québec. Mike Friis of the Wisconsin Department of Administration is leading this work. Thanks to Jody Peacock, of the Ports of Indiana, who represented Indiana as co-chair since 2016.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

GSGP TO LEAD TRADE MISSIONS TO MEXICO AND SOUTH AMERICA

GSGP will lead trade missions to Mexico and South America in the coming year. From November 11-14, GSGP and the Mexican Federation of the Aerospace Industry (FEMIA) will lead regional companies to Queretaro and Chihuahua, Mexico, for an aerospace sector trade mission. Additionally, from March 24-29, 2019, GSGP will lead a multi-sector trade to São Paulo, Brazil, and Bogotá, Colombia.

From June 1-9, GSGP led a successful trade mission to South Africa and Tanzania. Participating companies held more than 75 meetings in South Africa, Tanzania, and Kenya and at the Africa Health Trade Show. Company participants from Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania included Adhezion Biomedical, Liberty Pumps, Hydralock, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Trinity Seven and Right Answer.
GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS WELCOME PREMIER FORD OF ONTARIO

On June 29, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers welcomed Ontario Premier Doug Ford as the newest member of the GSGP Board of Directors. Premier Ford was elected Premier-designate on June 7. Prior to his election, Premier Ford served as a Toronto City Councillor and worked in the private sector.

TOURISM

GREAT LAKES USA HOSTS CHINESE DELEGATION

Great Lakes USA held its first Chinese trade familiarization tour, hosting six tour operators in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The tour included stops in Springfield, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Cleveland, Dayton, and Mansfield, Ohio.