



**For Immediate Release**

December 11, 2025

**Contact:** Peter Johnson

[pjohnson@gsgp.org](mailto:pjohnson@gsgp.org)

**Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers Launch Initiative to  
“Future Proof” the Great Lakes Compact and Agreement**

**Chicago, IL.** — The Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP) today announced a new multi-year initiative to “future proof” the [Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact](#) and companion [Agreement](#), ensuring the region’s landmark water management framework remains strong, effective, and resilient for decades to come. The initiative is supported by funding from The Joyce Foundation, Fred and Barbara Erb Family Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

GSGP announced the initiative in conjunction with today’s virtual meetings of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin Compact Council and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body, which oversee water use decision-making across the basin.

The initiative will focus on preserving long-term continuity, preparing the next generation of leaders, and building capacity to meet future water management challenges.

“For nearly twenty years, the Great Lakes Compact has provided a powerful, collaborative model for safeguarding our region’s waters,” said David Naftzger, GSGP’s Executive Director. “As new challenges arise, we must ensure that future leaders have the tools, knowledge, and collaborative networks needed to sustain this work. ‘Future proofing’ is about protecting our waters and the institutions that steward them.”

“Protecting the Great Lakes is an ongoing commitment,” said Loren Wobig, chair of the Compact Council and Regional Body. “This initiative will help ensure that tomorrow’s leaders inherit a resilient, collaborative system capable of sustaining our waters for generations to come.”

“The Great Lakes Compact has served as a strong foundation for shared stewardship, and this initiative ensures we will continue building on that legacy. By investing in future leaders and strengthening our collective capacity, we can continue to safeguard the region’s waters,” said Mary Mertz, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and incoming chair of the Compact Council and Regional Body.

“Joyce is proud to support initiatives like this one that help ensure that the Great Lakes remain healthy and the institutions that protect them remain strong,” said Elizabeth Cisar, director of The Joyce Foundation’s Environment Program.

The Great Lakes Compact and the companion Agreement, adopted in 2008, create a common set of rules for water withdrawals and diversions across the eight U.S. States and two Canadian Provinces in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin. This framework has helped ensure that water use decisions are transparent, science-based, and aligned with the long-term health of the region.

The new initiative will support a proactive, collaborative process to:

- Maintain the institutional memory, expertise, core values and relationships that underpin the Compact and Agreement; and,
- Conduct succession planning and build leadership capacity across States and Provinces with the assistance of Wishnick & Associates, LLC and Serendipity Consulting, Inc.; and,
- Identify potential sources of future pressure on regional water resources and governance systems. This work will be conducted by researchers and experts from the Global Center for Climate Change and Transboundary Waters as well as the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan; the Sustainability Institute, the Department of Integrated Systems Engineering and the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geodetic Engineering at The Ohio State University; as well as the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; and,
- Equip jurisdictions with tools and strategies to respond effectively over time.

With changing demographics, evolving economic priorities, and shifting water demands across North America, the future requires strong institutions, informed leadership, and durable cooperation. This ‘future proofing’ initiative reflects the region’s broader commitment to proactive, forward-looking water stewardship.

#### About GSGP

GSGP 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 nearly \$9.3 (US) trillion economy and protect the world’s largest system of surface fresh water.

### About The Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation is a Chicago-based, nonpartisan, private foundation that invests in policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility for the next generation in the Great Lakes region in the areas of Culture, Democracy, Education & Economic Mobility, Environment, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform, and Journalism. Learn more at [www.joycefdn.org](http://www.joycefdn.org).

### About the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Automotive pioneer Charles Stewart Mott established the private charitable foundation that bears his name in 1926 in Flint, Michigan. The Mott Foundation supports and works with organizations in our hometown of Flint and communities around the world to promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. We make grants to nonprofit organizations working in our four areas of interest: civil society, education, environment and the Flint area. In 2024, the Foundation made 360 grants totaling more than \$160 million. For more information, visit [mott.org](http://mott.org).

### About the Fred and Barbara Erb Family Foundation

The Fred and Barbara Erb Family Foundation envisions a flourishing, healthy, and resilient Great Lakes ecosystem and a culturally vibrant, sustainable Southeast Michigan. Toward this end, the Foundation strengthens the cultural and environmental organizations that share its vision to make this a reality for generations to come. The Foundation will conclude its grantmaking by 2034. For more information about its spenddown, please visit [erbff.org](http://erbff.org).