



GREAT LAKES
ST. LAWRENCE
GOVERNORS
& PREMIERS



2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Great Lakes St. Lawrence
Governors & Premiers

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers continue to advance their future-oriented agenda to grow the region's \$6 trillion economy and protect the world's greatest freshwater system. Together, they collaborate with indispensable partners to expand international trade and tourism, and support industry clusters including maritime transportation. The Governors and Premiers also lead the region's work to protect and restore the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin. These initiatives continue to successfully build consensus with partners in government, industry and the nongovernmental sector, all working toward shared goals.



MARITIME

The Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region partner to accelerate job growth and economic development. A shared goal is to double maritime trade and shrink the environmental impact of the region's transportation network. Working toward this goal, in 2019 the Governors & Premiers created a partnership with the Port of Antwerp, Belgium, to boost traffic between the Great Lakes St. Lawrence and Western Europe.

"Cruise the Great Lakes" is a new international partnership to bring more cruise passengers to the region. In recent years, the cruise industry has grown rapidly and is poised for major growth, with significant economic benefits for the entire region. Cruising now generates over 100,000 annual port visits by passengers to destinations large and small throughout the region. The number of ships cruising in the region is expected to increase by about 30% in the next three years.



The Governors & Premiers are working to solidify the region's international leadership in autonomous and connected technologies. A Smart Ships Action Plan includes policy recommendations for governments and industry. The Smart Ships Coalition links industry, academia and other partners to collaboratively grow this sector. And, the Marine Autonomy Research Site--the world's first freshwater test facility for smart ships--opened at Michigan Tech University.

The Governors & Premiers continue to track progress and improve management of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence system. Blue Accounting is an innovative new platform that incorporates regional freight flow data and other information. Separately, a partnership with the Central Commission of the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) will foster the exchange of these data, and information about system governance and management.

PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

In collaboration with a multidisciplinary team, the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers developed the Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform. This platform represents a new investment model to foster environmentally sustainable economic growth. It seeks to attract investment capital for a multi-asset portfolio of projects and other real assets that contribute to the vitality of the region's water and generate competitive, market based financial returns. Environmental impact goals include reducing nutrient inputs to sensitive watersheds, increasing the efficiency of water utilities and reducing emissions.



GREAT LAKES IMPACT
INVESTMENT PLATFORM

Prosperity by nature.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE



The Governors' & Premiers' international trade partnership continues to expand its global reach and impact. Thirteen foreign trade offices connect regional companies with consumers and business partners in 91 countries on six continents. International trade missions also continue to increase the value and volume of regional exports. In 2018, GSGP led successful trade missions to Mexico, South Africa and Tanzania. Over 50 business leaders participated and benefited from over 600 customized b2b meetings. GSGP led its first sector specific trade mission focusing on the aerospace industry. Working with the Mexican aerospace industry and clusters, Great Lakes companies positioned themselves as qualified suppliers to this fast growing sector.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

The Governors and Premiers continue to lead the effort to protect the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin from aquatic invaders. Priorities include taking aggressive action against high-risk aquatic invasive species (AIS), promoting regional cooperation across borders, and fostering collaboration among AIS experts, fisheries experts, and law enforcement officials. In 2018, the Governors and Premiers added five new AIS to the “least wanted” list. This list of 21 high-risk AIS is driving regional action. The states and provinces have taken nearly 50 separate actions to restrict these species. They have also created a regional Mutual Aid Agreement, and organized multi-jurisdictional response exercises to build capacity and strengthen regional defenses. Most recently, Ohio led an exercise targeting grass carp in the Sandusky River. Following through on their 2017 pledge, all ten states and provinces now participate in a Memorandum of Understanding that promotes information sharing and cross-border investigations. The Memorandum has been used in several inter-jurisdictional investigations pertaining to both invasive and endangered species—helping to ensure that violators are caught and held accountable.



TOURISM



The Conference's tourism partnership, Great Lakes USA, successfully showcases the region and its many attractions to overseas international tourists from the United Kingdom/Ireland, German-speaking countries and China. The new Chinese program, targeting the world's fastest growing source of tourists, completed its first full year with many successes. One strategic promotion included hosting a famous Chinese singer which garnered more than \$1 million in media value.

WATER MANAGEMENT

The Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers continues to serve as Secretariat for the "Great Lakes Compact Council" and Regional Body. Through a collaboration with various partners, these entities adopted new rules and guidance used to review water diversion requests. Work to further update these procedures began in 2019. In addition, these groups are updating their science strategy to improve data and information in order to strengthen the scientific basis for decision making.



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