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Great Lakes Governors Lead Historic Effort to Protect and Restore the Lakes

Chicago, Ill. (December 3, 2004) – Great Lakes Governors today signed a historic pledge to further efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. Dozens of Federal, State, Municipal and Tribal government officials from the region joined the Governors in signing the “Great Lakes Declaration.” The signing officially kicks off the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. Over the next year, this Collaboration will develop a comprehensive strategy to protect and restore the Lakes.

“For the first time, representatives from all levels of government, Tribes and other Great Lakes stakeholders have come together to demonstrate to the entire Congress that the Great Lakes community speaks with one voice,” said Council Co-Chair Ohio Governor Bob Taft. “Through the Collaboration, we will work together in the coming months to forge a clear, understandable, compelling vision of what the Great Lakes can be and why we must make them truly Great again.”

Council Co-Chair Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle said, “Tremendous strides have been made but we must re-double our efforts to protect, preserve, restore and improve the Great Lakes and its ecosystem.”

Eight work groups will meet for the first time this afternoon, their work corresponding to the Governors’ priorities, including protecting people’s health, stopping invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat and reducing pollution reaching the Great Lakes.

Separately, the Council of Great Lakes Governors is addressing the sustainable use of water resources through the Great Lakes Charter Annex implementation process.

More than 300 people attended the meeting. Governors participating included Council Co-Chair Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, Council Co-Chair Ohio Governor Bob Taft, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and New York Governor George Pataki. Others in attendance included U.S. EPA Administrator Michael Leavitt, Secretary of Homeland Security and former Council of Great Lakes Governors Chair Tom Ridge, Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Carol Molnau representing Governor Tim Pawlenty, United States senators and congressmen, State senators and representatives, Great Lakes mayors and Tribal representatives.

Information about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration is available at: <http://epa.gov/greatlakes/collaboration/index.html>. Information about the Governors’ priorities is available at: <http://www.cglg.org/1projects/priorities/index.asp>. For more information, please call David Naftzger at 312-407-0177.

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