



PRESS RELEASE

GREAT LAKES GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS SIGN CHARTER ANNEX : “THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE TO DISCUSS THE PROTECTION OF GREAT LAKES WATER THAN NIAGARA FALLS”

TOM RIDGE
CHAIRMAN
Governor of Pennsylvania

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Contact: Maggie Grant
312-407-0177

JOHN ENGLER
Governor of Michigan

SCOTT MCCALLUM
Governor of Wisconsin

FRANK O'BANNON
Governor of Indiana

GEORGE E. PATAKI
Governor of New York

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Governor of Minnesota

The Great Lakes Governors and Premiers of Ontario and Quebec today signed the Great Lakes Charter Annex 2001 in Niagara Falls, New York. The Charter Annex is an amendment to the Great Lakes Charter of 1985, both good-faith agreements signed by all the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers. The Charter Annex has been developed over the last 18 months to update the Great Lakes regional water management system and ensure the Great Lakes are protected, conserved, restored, and improved for future generations.

The Annex is an important step in the ongoing process to the creation of a stronger regional water management system for the Great Lakes. In the Annex, the Governors and Premiers outline the framework for a set of more binding agreements among the Great Lakes States and Provinces and establish a series of principles for a new standard for reviewing proposed withdrawals of Great Lakes water. The Governors and Premiers also call for the ongoing involvement of the public as they develop the agreements and how the standard will be implemented.

Under the current Great Lakes Charter, the Governors and Premiers of Ontario and Quebec notify and consult with each other on proposals for diversions and consumptive uses of waters within the Great Lakes Basin of over five million gallons (19 million liters) per day. Additionally, the Governors have direct authority over the Great Lakes waters within the United States through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended 2000. Under the WRDA, no bulk export or diversions of Great Lakes waters from the Basin can take place without the unanimous approval of all of the Great Lakes Governors.

“I can not think of a more appropriate place to talk about water than Niagara Falls. The Annex we signed today is a roadmap for ensuring the continued protection of the Great Lakes,” said New York Governor George E. Pataki, host of the Council’s 19th annual meeting. “We want to make sure that we who rely on and manage the Great Lakes on a day-to-day basis have the tools necessary to make certain that our water is used wisely and effectively to the benefit of all of our citizens.”

MARGARET M. GRANT
Executive Director

Over 300 individuals from throughout the eight Great Lakes States and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec came to Niagara Falls today to learn more about the Governors’ and Premiers’ plan for protecting the Great Lakes.

35 East Wacker Drive
Suite 1850
Chicago, IL 60601

Voice: 312-407-0177
Fax: 312-407-0038
Web: www.cglg.org
e-mail: cglg@cglg.org

“The economy of the Great Lakes Region was built on the availability of water for transportation and economic activity. We can not take for granted that the availability of water for our citizens is limitless and that we will always be able to drink clean water as well as swim and fish in our Lakes,” said Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Council of Great Lakes Governors. “I was raised on Lake Erie and I want to make certain that my teenage son and daughter will be able to enjoy the Lake with their children. This is dependent upon our taking action now to protect this precious natural resource.”

“The Council of Great Lakes Governors is uniquely positioned to provide important guidance for the stewardship of a truly remarkable natural resource: the waters of the Great Lakes,” said incoming Council Chairman Governor Bob Taft of Ohio. “I join my Great Lakes colleagues in reaffirming a commitment to protect the waters that bind us and our neighbors in the Canadian Provinces. I take pride in the strong, bi-national working relationship we have and look forward to advancing a shared vision for the future of the Great Lakes as Chairman of the Council.”

The Council of Great Lakes Governors is a non-profit, non-partisan partnership of Governors of the Great Lakes States—Illinois (George H. Ryan), Indiana (Frank O’Bannon), Michigan (John Engler), Minnesota (Jesse Ventura), New York (George E. Pataki), Ohio (Bob Taft), Pennsylvania (Tom Ridge), and Wisconsin (Scott McCallum). The Premiers of Ontario (Mike Harris) and Quebec (Bernard Landry) are associate members. Through the Council, the Governors collectively tackle the environmental and economic challenges facing the citizens of the region.

The full text of Annex 2001 can be accessed at www.cglg.org/projects/water/annex2001.pdf.

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