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GOVERNORS APPLAUD CONGRESSIONAL INTRODUCTION OF GREAT LAKES COMPACT RESOLUTION

Chicago, Illinois—The Great Lakes Governors today applauded members of Congress for boldly acting to protect the Great Lakes--St. Lawrence River Basin. Specifically, members of Congress led by Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan), Senator George V. Voinovich (R-Ohio), Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Michigan), Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-Minnesota), Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers (R-Michigan) and Congressman Steven C. LaTourette (R-Ohio) introduced a joint resolution providing consent to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact.

In December 2005, following a nearly five-year negotiation, the Governors of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin reached agreement on the Compact. The Compact provides a comprehensive management framework for achieving sustainable water use and resource protection. It has been ratified by each of the eight Great Lakes State legislatures. To become law, Congress must now provide its consent.

Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, Council of Great Lakes Governors Chair, said, "I applaud the members of Congress for their leadership in protecting the Great Lakes. It is gratifying to see the consensus that we have built in our region reflected in the bipartisan Congressional support for this historic measure. We must now do all that we can to work with our Congressional partners to turn these protections into law."

"Today I applaud the introduction of legislation to approve the Great Lakes Compact and urge Congress to act quickly." said Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. "Once enacted into law, the Compact will ensure that our Great Lakes are protected and preserved for generations to come."

"Passage of the Great Lakes Compact is central to assuring that harmful water diversions are controlled and this precious eco-system is protected for future generations," said New York Governor David Paterson. "The Great Lakes, constituting nearly twenty percent of the world's available fresh water and ninety percent of the United States' supply of fresh surface water, need to be protected and cherished. I applaud the Members of Congress who are supporting the Great Lakes Compact and the Great Lakes States' desire to conserve our resources."

Today's introduction illustrates the regional and bi-partisan consensus that has been built in support of the Compact. A substantial number of members of Congress are original cosponsors

of the resolution introduced today and both of the presumptive nominees of the major parties (Senator Barack Obama (D-Illinois) and Senator John McCain (R-Arizona)) have expressed their support for the Compact.

The Compact includes the following points:

- Economic development will be fostered through the sustainable use and responsible management of Basin waters.
- Regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency will be developed, and they will be reviewed every five years. Each State will develop and implement a water conservation and efficiency program.
- The collection of technical data will be strengthened, and the States will share comparable information, which will improve decision-making by the governments.
- There is a strong commitment to continued public involvement in the implementation of the Compact.

Historically, States and the federal government have supported interstate compacts to address water supply, water quality and flood control issues within the hydrological context of watersheds and basins. As of July 2008, there are at least 41 interstate water compacts that have been entered into by the party States and consented to by the U.S. Congress over a period of decades. 45 States and the District of Columbia currently belong to at least one interstate water compact and many States belong to more than one. These compacts provide an effective means to manage shared water resources consistent with our system of constitutional federalism.

The Compact has attracted the support of key members of Congress, Mayors and local government officials as well as more than 150 diverse groups of stakeholders who depend on the Great Lakes. More than 1300 State legislators have voted to approve the Compact—about 95% of all legislators who have cast a vote on it.

The Great Lakes are a national treasure—important to our nation and the world as both an environmental and economic asset. Our national economy depends on the Great Lakes for industrial uses, hydropower, maritime commerce, agricultural irrigation and many other uses. The Great Lakes are also a globally unique and important environmental resource. The Compact will ensure that the Lakes are used sustainably in order to continue to provide benefits to us all.

The Governors' letter sent today to members of Congress, the Compact and additional information is available at www.cglg.org.

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