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GOVERNOR GRANHOLM SIGNS HISTORIC GREAT LAKES COMPACT

ACTION NOW MOVES TO CONGRESS

Saugatuck, Michigan—Governor Jennifer Granholm today signed Michigan’s legislation ratifying an interstate Compact that will create unprecedented protections for the Great Lakes--St. Lawrence River Basin. With this signing, the eight States of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have now completed ratification of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. To become law, Congress must now provide its consent.

"This is a historic day for the state of Michigan," Granholm said. "We must ensure that our Great Lakes are protected and preserved for generations to come and this legislation fulfills that promise."

Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, Council of Great Lakes Governors Chair, said, "I applaud Governor Granholm and the State of Michigan. It is gratifying to see our region uniting as never before to protect the Great Lakes. We must now build on this momentum--working with our Congressional partners to turn these protections into law."

Governor Granholm’s signing illustrates the regional and bi-partisan consensus that has been built in support of the Compact, support that is also reflected in Congress. To date, more than 20 members of Congress including both of the presumptive nominees of the major parties (Senator McCain and Senator Obama) have expressed their support for the Compact. Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan), Senator George V. Voinovich (R-Ohio) and Congressman James L. Oberstar (D-Minnesota) will lead efforts to secure the consent of the U.S. Congress.

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. The eight Great Lakes States reached a similar, good faith, agreement with Ontario and Québec in 2005, which the Provinces are using to amend their existing water programs for greater regional consistency.

The Compact includes the following points:

- Economic development will be fostered through the sustainable use and responsible management of Basin waters.
- The States will ensure that authority over Great Lakes water uses is retained in the region.
- 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 five Great Lakes comprise the world's largest surface freshwater system. The partners to the Compact have worked to develop a program to carefully manage and protect the freshwaters of the region. The Compact and additional information is available at www.cglg.org.

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