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MINNESOTA MAKES HISTORY AS FIRST STATE TO APPROVE LANDMARK GREAT LAKES COMPACT

Duluth, Minnesota – Governor Tim Pawlenty today signed legislation making Minnesota the first State to formally ratify an interstate compact that will provide unprecedented protections for the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin.

The Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, which includes a ban on new diversions of water outside the Basin with limited exceptions, was endorsed about a year ago by the Governors of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. To become law, it must be approved by each of the State legislatures and Congress must give its consent.

“This compact will improve and protect the health of the Great Lakes and our economy. I commend our legislature and, in particular, Representative Tom Huntley and Senator Ann Rest for continuing Minnesota’s legacy of regional Great Lakes leadership,” said Governor Pawlenty.

“I applaud Governor Pawlenty and the State of Minnesota for their action. Implementing this compact is critical to our efforts to restore and protect the Great Lakes. I look forward to the State of Wisconsin similarly enacting these protections,” said Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, Council of Great Lakes Governors Chair.

The Governors and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec signed a companion agreement in December, 2005, to provide protections throughout the region. Ontario and Québec are currently moving forward with provincial implementation. No federal legislation is required in Canada.

The agreements detail how the States and Provinces will manage and protect the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin and will provide a framework for each State and Province to enact laws protecting the Basin.

The agreements include the following points:

- Lasting economic development will be balanced with sustainable water use to ensure Great Lakes waters are managed responsibly.
- There will be a ban on new diversions of water from the Basin. Limited exceptions could be allowed, such as for public water supply purposes in communities near the Basin, but exceptions would be strictly regulated.
- The States and Provinces will use a consistent standard to review proposed uses of Great Lakes water.
- Regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency will be developed, and they will be reviewed every five years. Each State and Province will develop and implement a water conservation and efficiency program.
- The collection of technical data will be strengthened, and the States and Provinces will share the information, which will improve decision-making by the governments.
- There is a strong commitment to continued public involvement in the implementation of the agreements.

The complete text of the agreements and additional information is available at www.cglg.org.

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