



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Jr.
Lansing, Michigan

VICE CHAIR

Lt. Governor Patrick Quinn
Chicago, Illinois

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Thomas E. Huntley
Minnesota State Representative
Duluth, Minnesota

David Phippen
Policy Director for
Environment and Natural Resources
Office of the Governor
Indianapolis, Indiana

Ken DeBeaussart
Director
Office of the Great Lakes
Mich. Dept. of Environ. Quality
Lansing, Michigan

Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner
New York Dept. of Environmental
Conservation
Albany, New York

Sean Logan
Director
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources
Columbus, Ohio

William Carr
Team Leader
Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs
Toronto, Ontario

Cathleen Curran Myers
Deputy Director for
Water Management
PA Dept. of Envir. Protection
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Marc T. Boucher
Québec Government Representative
Chicago, Illinois

Todd Ambs
Administrator
Division of Water
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
Madison, Wisconsin

Sept. 22, 2008

Statement by Commission Chairman Lt. Gov. John Cherry
on passage of Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2008

On Thursday, September 18, the U.S. House of Representatives reauthorized the Great Lakes Legacy Act. The Great Lakes Commission now calls on the Senate to take up and pass the Legacy Act before Congress adjourns. Great Lakes Sens. Levin and Voinovich introduced a companion version in May.

This represents significant progress in addressing one of the most troubling and longstanding of all Great Lakes environmental ailments: toxic sediments, and validates efforts by the Great Lakes Commission and its partners to clean up the legacy left by decades of pollution in the Great Lakes. Very simply, this legislation will improve quality of life, help stimulate regional economic growth, and help us restore and protect the Great Lakes for our children and grandchildren.

Cleaning up the 31 “Areas of Concern” identified in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has been one of the highest legislative priorities for the Great Lakes Commission since Congress first passed the Legacy Act in 2002. The Commission has consistently supported full funding of the Act, and we are delighted by the House plan to increase that level threefold, to \$150 million a year – a level of commitment that will go much further toward cleaning up all the Areas Of Concern in the Great Lakes.

The legislation responds to many of the Commission’s recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Legacy Act program. Most noteworthy, the House legislation authorizes the use of Legacy Act funds to restore habitat at sites that have been cleaned up and it provides for full federal funding for initial assessments of additional contaminated sites. These and other changes will further strengthen the Legacy Act and continue the progress that has been made over the past six years.

We congratulate the sponsors of the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2008, Reps. James Oberstar (D-MN) and Vern Ehlers (R-MI) and hope to work with them and others in the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation to ensure Senate passage of the Legacy Act. Their successful efforts give us even greater encouragement to continue restoration efforts outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and we are eager to continue working with all our partners to make the Collaboration’s entire restoration strategy a reality.

Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, chair of the Great Lakes Commission, will be blogging on this subject all week at greatlaketownhall.org