



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 Pippen

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

Ken DeBeaussaert

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. 29, 2008

*Contacts:*

*Tim Eder, Great Lakes Commission (734-604-7281)*

*Matt Doss, Great Lakes Commission (734-474-1985)*

*Ben Kobrman, Office of Lt. Governor Cherry (517-490-6798)*

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

“The Great Lakes Commission applauds our region’s congressional leaders for securing reauthorizing of the Great Lakes Legacy Act. The House of Representatives approved an amended version of H.R. 6460 on Sept. 28, which extends the Legacy Act for two years at level funding of \$54 million per year. The bill now goes to President Bush for signing.

The Great Lakes Legacy Act has provided millions of dollars to help communities restore the economic and environmental health of their waterfronts. Funding for cleaning up polluted sediments enhances economic vitality of communities, supports waterfront redevelopment and improves recreational opportunities.

Special thanks go to Michigan’s Sen. Carl Levin and Rep. Vernon Ehlers, and their colleagues Sen. George Voinovich and Rep. James Oberstar, for their leadership in advancing the Legacy Act legislation, which is critical for sustaining progress in cleaning up toxic hot spots in the Great Lakes. We especially appreciate their efforts during this busy period in Washington.

While this is a positive step forward, the Great Lakes Commission is disappointed that despite the best efforts of our region’s Congressional leaders, no additional funding was provided. HR 6460 first passed the House of Representatives on September 18 at \$150M. At the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the Bush Administration weighed in with a letter to House and Senate leaders in opposition to the bill, because of the proposed funding increase. To gain approval in the Senate, the bill was amended and the funding kept level with legislation approved in 2002.

In May I testified before Congress in support of reauthorizing the Legacy Act and increasing the funding level to \$150 million annually. This increase would have been far short of the estimated \$1.5 billion and \$4.5 billion actually needed to restore all of

the Great Lakes' Areas of Concern. The increased funding level was broadly support by the Great Lakes Commission, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the Healing Our Waters Coalition and the Council of Great Lakes Industries. This also reflects the consensus recommendations contained in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes. The Brookings Institution has projected that cleaning up contaminated sediments in the Great Lakes will increase coastal property values by \$12 billion to \$19 billion.

The Commission is pleased that cleanup projects can proceed for two more years. Important policy changes in the revised Act should speed the cleanup process and a new provision will aid in restoring degraded habitat for fish and wildlife.

Since its initial passage in 2002, the Legacy Act has proven to be among the most successful Great Lakes cleanup programs ever. The Act has enabled removal of nearly one million cubic yards of toxic sediments from the Great Lakes and leveraged more than \$44 million from non-federal partners.

The Great Lakes Commission pledges its support to work with Congress and the next Administration to increase funding for the Legacy Act, halt the introduction of invasive species, reduce pollution and restore the health of this national treasure when Congress returns in 2009.”

###

*The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by Lt. Gov. John Cherry, is a nonpartisan, binational compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors' appointees, state legislators, and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*