

Mackinac Island, Michigan
June 1, 2013

RESOLUTION

GREAT LAKES GOVERNORS' TRADE POLICY PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, effective international trade and investment policy is critical to the Great Lakes States efforts to foster economic growth and job creation, and depends on effective State-federal collaboration; and,

WHEREAS, each State has an aggressive program to achieve its goals, and the Council of Great Lakes Governors has served as a means for collaboration including through the Council's seven shared trade offices, Great Lakes USA tourism partnership, multi-State trade missions, participation on the U.S. Trade Representative's Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee, "Invest in the Great Lakes Region" program, and through other initiatives; and,

WHEREAS, there is an ongoing need for State-federal dialogue and cooperation to manage implementation of existing international trade agreements including resolution of trade policy disputes, protection of intellectual property and to effectively address emerging issues; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. federal government is pursuing negotiation of new international agreements including a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, Trans-pacific Partnership, International Trade Agreement on Services, and others; and,

WHEREAS, these negotiations if successfully completed along with effective implementation of existing agreements have the potential to further open foreign markets to U.S. exports, increase foreign direct investment in the U.S., create jobs and foster economic growth while at the same time supporting State regulatory and other programs; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. federal government's State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) pilot grant initiative authorizes grants to States for small business exporting assistance programs under the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010; and,

WHEREAS the STEP program has provided needed resources to participating Great Lakes States and those States support continued federal funding in FY 2014 to ensure continuity along with program improvements.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Lakes Governors call for improvement of STEP implementation and effectiveness through amending legislation to expand and permanently authorize the STEP grant program, ensuring that STEP program management is based in the most expert federal economic development agency with proven capacity for administering export expansion grant programs with States and territories, and with demonstrable trade development expertise provided by staff in domestic and overseas export assistance offices.

Adopted by the Governors of the Great Lakes States on this 1st day of June 2013.