



COMPASS

A REPORT FROM THE GREAT LAKES ST. LAWRENCE GOVERNORS & PREMIERS

JULY 2020

CHAIR'S LETTER

In recent months, we have continued to struggle with COVID-19. This affects us all in different ways including our shared work.

Our maritime system faces unprecedented challenges. Due to restrictions enacted by the Canadian and US federal governments, cruise ships will not operate on the Great Lakes in 2020. As a result, several years of remarkable growth for regional cruising will pause. Meanwhile, reduced demand for commodities like iron ore has affected commercial shipping and several ships have been laid up for the season. Despite this, we continue our work to improve safety and efficiency, and strengthen our maritime system.

Travel restrictions have postponed the GSGP trade mission to Japan and South Korea. Reduced tourism has required our Great Lakes USA marketing partnership to scale back its international marketing and program of events, tours and shows. Nevertheless, we continue our work to grow international export markets and showcase our region as a great place to live, work, and play.

Our commitment to our shared goals remains strong. We will continue to work together to protect the environment, create jobs, and grow the economy. Success will depend on our partnerships and we are grateful to all of you for your continuing work with us.

—Tony Evers
Chair, Great Lakes St. Lawrence
Governors & Premiers
Governor, State of Wisconsin



KEEPING UP THE FIGHT AGAINST AQUATIC INVADERS



Marbled crayfish (*Procambarus virginalis*)

The States and Provinces continue to lead the fight against aquatic invasive species. In recent months, Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario have all taken actions to keep the “[least wanted](#)” AIS out of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin.

Michigan and Ohio both added Marbled crayfish, also known as marmorkrebs, to prohibited species lists. These aquatic invaders are popular in the aquarium trade due to their unique ability to reproduce by cloning. Marbled crayfish can quickly reproduce and dominate lakes, rivers, and streams, while limiting food sources for native species.

Ohio also prohibited New Zealand Mud Snail, which can reproduce rapidly and overrun waterways. Ontario recently completed a public consultation period for potential regulations for several AIS, including five species included on the “least wanted” list. Overall, the States and Provinces have taken more than 50 actions to prevent invasion by high-risk species.



PLATFORM SHOWCASES 9 PROJECTS, \$450 MILLION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

In only six months since its public launch, the [Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform](#) has attracted nine projects representing \$450 million in economic activity. The most recent addition is the Buffalo Green Infrastructure Program. The Buffalo (New York) Sewer Authority is launching a green infrastructure retrofit grant program as part of its Long Term Control Plan to reduce combined sewer overflows, and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. Overall, the Platform's nine projects address eight of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Additionally, the Platform's first [quarterly newsletter](#) is now available. The newsletter features project profiles, webinars, upcoming events, and other news.

Now more than ever, it is critical that we build the right policy, financial and institutional structures, and properly align economic incentives to our common goals. The Platform and its unique structure will help us be better positioned to meet basic societal needs including safe dependable sources of water, healthy places to recreate, and vibrant communities to live and work, while broadly supporting human well-being.



For more information, please visit the [Great Lakes Impact Investment Platform website](#), [follow the Platform on LinkedIn](#), and [sign up for the newsletter](#).

WATER MANAGEMENT

REGIONAL BODY AND COMPACT COUNCIL FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING SCIENCE

Improving science and data for water management remains a top regional priority. As part of the development of a new [Science Strategy](#), the Regional Body and Compact Council hosted a virtual session during the International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR) conference in June. Presentations included an overview of the Science Strategy, research needs to address hydrologic impacts of climate change, and remote sensing to understand water budgets for agricultural uses.

During the [June 17 meetings](#) of the Regional Body and Compact Council, Professor Drew Gronewold of the University of Michigan presented research to [forecast lake water levels across multiple time scales](#). Jim Nicholas of Nicholas-H2O released a report on [changes in public water supply withdrawals from 1998-2018](#), which is part of a series of reports focused on key water use sectors in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin.

The Regional Body and Compact Council welcome the continuing support and partnership of the scientific community as they advance this important work.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

GSGP TRADE OFFICES HELPING REGION'S STATES & COMPANIES

GSGP's Network of 14 Trade Offices and member State Economic Development Agencies provide numerous resources to assist regional companies during these challenging times. This includes increased grant funding to cover market research, virtual B2B meetings, website localization, marketing, and translation. As part of COVID-19 response, several [GSGP Trade Offices](#) are helping member States to source much needed personal protective equipment including gloves, medical masks, respirators, goggles, and face shields.

Additionally, Richard Zurba, Director of the GSGP Southern Africa Office encourages companies to reevaluate their export plans. "Africa's youthful demographic, with average age under 20, and entrepreneurial business culture bode well for recovery. Much of Africa had strong growth going into the pandemic and many of these countries are going to come out well on the other side, although not unscathed. In the long-term Africa will emerge relatively stronger due to its business culture, and the realization by all large economic players that it is no longer a hinterland, but a place of strategic importance where business development is paramount."



TOURISM

CRUISE THE GREAT LAKES LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Cruise the Great Lakes members and partners are hard at work to ensure safe cruising on the Great Lakes in 2021 and beyond. Great Lakes cruises are fundamentally different than oceangoing cruises. For example, in 2019, the average vessel operating on the Great Lakes held fewer than 200 passengers. This is significantly smaller than large oceangoing cruise ships. Smaller ships give the cruise operators a unique ability to reduce risk factors, monitor and control passenger movement, enforce social distancing, and take other safety precautions. Building on this, the States and Provinces, convention and visitor bureaus, and other Cruise the Great Lakes partners are working with cruise lines and ports to create a safe and seamless cruise experience for passengers.



GREAT LAKES
ST. LAWRENCE
GOVERNORS
& PREMIERS

MEMBERS

Tony Evers,
Chair, Governor of Wisconsin

Mike DeWine,
Vice Chair, Governor of Ohio

Andrew Cuomo,
Governor of New York

Doug Ford,
Premier of Ontario

Eric Holcomb,
Governor of Indiana

François Legault,
Premier of Québec

J.B. Pritzker,
Governor of Illinois

Tim Walz,
Governor of Minnesota

Gretchen Whitmer,
Governor of Michigan

Tom Wolf,
Governor of Pennsylvania

STAFF

David Naftzger,
Executive Director

Peter Johnson,
Deputy Director

Toby McCarrick,
Executive Director,
Great Lakes USA

Zoë Munro,
Program Director

Mike Piskur,
Program Manager