



For Immediate Release

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**GOVERNORS AND PREMIERS ANNOUNCE CORPORATE 100% FISH PLEDGE,
LAUNCH REGIONAL TREES INITIATIVE WITH A PLANTING,
AND CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF COLLABORATION AT SUMMIT
~Michigan Governor set to become GSGP Chair~**

Cleveland, Ohio - The region's Governors and Premiers are gathering through the weekend for their 2023 Leadership Summit and celebrating 40 years of working together through the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP). Today they announced the continued expansion of GSGP's 100% fish initiative with a corporate pledge. They also planted a tree this afternoon to launch the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Trees Initiative, a regional initiative with a goal of planting 250 million trees by 2033, and other efforts to grow the region's \$6 trillion economy. This initiative builds on the tree planting goals several Great Lakes St. Lawrence States and Provinces have already implemented. Additionally, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer was selected to serve as the next GSGP chair, starting in January.

"Lake Superior and Lake Michigan are critical to Wisconsin and the greater Great Lakes St. Lawrence region, so our collective work to preserve and protect the Great Lakes is so important," **Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, GSGP Chair, said.** "I applaud the 14 companies supporting the 100% fish pledge, and the companies who will sign the pledge in the future. I also encourage others across the region to join our efforts in Wisconsin by prioritizing tree planting through the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Tree Initiative. The trees we plant now will create positive environmental and economic benefits for Wisconsin, Lake Michigan, and the Great Lakes St Lawrence region for decades to come."

"The Great Lakes are an incredible natural resource, and protecting Lake Erie is a high priority of my administration. Through the GSGP and Ohio's data-driven H2Ohio initiative, we are investing in long-term solutions for improved water quality," **Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, GSGP Vice Chair, said.** "We are committed to promoting the environment and economic growth in this region. I congratulate the GSGP on 40 years of facilitating cooperation among the Governors and Premiers on some of our region's most important issues."

As Chair and Vice Chair, Governor Evers and Governor DeWine are hosting the GSGP Leadership Summit in Cleveland today through October 15. Joining them are also Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and senior officials representing the other Governors and Premiers.

“In Michigan and across this entire region, the Great Lakes define us,” **Michigan Governor and incoming GSGP Chair Gretchen Whitmer said.** “Our world-renowned lakes are the reason people move to and stay in Michigan, and you better believe I’ll do everything I can to protect them. I am grateful for the commitments we have made at this year’s summit to meet the 100% fish pledge and plant 250 million trees. Our beautiful lakes and lands offer us extraordinary opportunities, but they also come with awesome responsibilities. Through our effective partnership, my fellow Governors and Premiers will continue fostering greater economic cooperation to grow our \$6 trillion regional economy and bolster our conservation efforts to protect our precious natural resources for generations.”

“Lake Erie is a critical part of Pennsylvania’s history, culture, and economy, generating millions of dollars in tourism and economic activity for Northwestern Pennsylvania,” **Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro said.** “That’s why I’m proud of our efforts to plant more trees, and protect our natural resources, and encourage businesses in the Great Lakes region to use sustainable fishing practices. I look forward to continuing this decades-long partnership with my fellow Great Lakes Governors to protect our heritage, promote economic growth, and sustain our vital natural resources for years to come.”

“Lake Michigan is a unique treasure and resource that Northwest Indiana is lucky to have in our backyard,” **Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb said.** “The Great Lakes provide jobs, commerce, agriculture, tourism, a special quality of place and an unmatched natural resource for millions of people to enjoy. We must do our part to preserve them which is why I’m so proud to be a part of the 100% Great Lakes Fish Pledge and tree initiative to ensure we protect one of our country’s greatest freshwater assets.”

"Growing up on Lake Erie, I know our Great Lakes are an extraordinary treasure that we must continue to protect and preserve for future generations," **New York Governor Kathy Hochul said.** "I'm proud to join with my fellow Governors and Premiers from across the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence to continue working towards a common purpose to protect these environmental gems, while ensuring our vital waterways can continue to provide an economic boost to neighboring communities, states and provinces. New York remains committed to protecting these waterways and its clean water through record investments such as the \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act so that from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River all those who live nearby or visit its shores will be able to continue to enjoy this natural beauty."

“The Great Lakes are a vital natural resource for our entire nation, and I’m proud to collaborate with fellow Governors and organizations to further our work to protect this resource,” **Illinois Governor JB Pritzker said.** “For 40 years, the GSGP has convened to lead initiatives that

safeguard our invaluable source of fresh water and drive economic growth in the region. We're taking action through programs like the 100% Great Lakes Fish Pledge and the Trees Initiatives to advance sustainability for future generations to come."

"The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is the third largest economy in the world," **Québec Premier François Legault said.** "Our strategies regarding economic development and the battery sector, as well as our maritime vision, are complementary to the efforts being implemented by our partners in the region. A new era of commercial collaboration between Québec and the United States is emerging, and that is why we are pleased to be hosting the next summit of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers in Québec City in 2025."

During the Summit, the Governors and Premiers announced:

100% Great Lakes Fish Pledge

Fourteen companies have already signed a pledge committing them to productively use 100% of each commercially caught fish by 2025. Read the pledge online [here](#).

Trees Initiative

As part of the [goal of planting 250 million trees](#) in the region by 2033, GSGP also launched the Great Lakes Green Events program that encourages organizations hosting gatherings to leave a positive footprint for the community and region by increasing their sustainability. Furthermore, GSGP will connect conference and event organizers with local tree planting partners and then plant trees within that local community. GSGP's [tree planting resolution](#) builds upon tree planting pledges that Governors, Premiers, and others across the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region have already made.

Great Lakes Cruising

The Governors' and Premiers' cruise marketing partnership, Cruise the Great Lakes, celebrated this year's record-breaking number of cruise passengers and their economic impact. Total cruise passenger traffic totaled about 170,000, up 13% from last season. Overall, 800 port visits generated an estimated US\$235 million in economic impact across the international Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Shipping

GSGP released three new reports aimed at accelerating the decarbonization of the region's commercial shipping.

- A regional strategy exploring future energy options for Great Lakes shipping—partners include the US Maritime Administration, American Bureau of Shipping and the International Council on Clean Transportation.
- [Strategies to use biofuels](#) to achieve regional emissions reduction goals—prepared by Innovation Maritime.
- [Annual report on ship emissions](#) in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence by the International Council on Clean Transportation.

Upcoming Trade Missions

Three trade missions are planned in the coming year.

- [Rebuild Ukraine Exhibition and Poland](#) – November 12-17, 2023
- [Vietnam and the Philippines](#) – April 20-27, 2024
- [Brazil and Chile](#) – June 8-14, 2024

40th Anniversary of GSGP

On May 24, 1983, the region's Governors gathered on Mackinac Island to form what was then the Council of Great Lakes Governors (now GSGP). As part of the Summit, two former Governors who attended that gathering--James Blanchard from Michigan and Richard Celeste from Ohio--offered some reflections. They are available at <https://vimeo.com/873285367>.

The Governors and Premiers also adopted a resolution regarding [lead](#) during the Summit. The full Summit agenda can be found [HERE](#). The 2025 Leadership Summit will be held in Québec.

GSGP unites the chief executives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec and Wisconsin. The Governors and Premiers work as equal partners to grow the region's \$6 trillion economy and protect the world's largest system of surface fresh water.

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