



For Immediate Release

September 22, 2026

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New Action Agenda Supports Sustainable Agriculture in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Region

(CHICAGO, IL) – The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP) today unveiled the *Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Action Agenda*, a sweeping regional framework designed to elevate coordination, unify monitoring efforts, accelerate the exchange of knowledge, and unlock new opportunities for collective action.

The release of this Action Agenda marks a major milestone for [the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Initiative](#), which first launched at GSGP's 2025 Leadership Summit, and underscores a renewed regional commitment to driving transformative, long-term progress for the agriculture industry.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Action Agenda is available at <https://www.gsgp.org/projects/sustainable-agriculture/resources>

Chaired by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Director Dr. Tim Boring, the initiative reflects a shared commitment by the eight Great Lakes States and the two Provinces of Ontario and Québec to address agricultural challenges that cross borders and require a coordinated regional approach.

The region's agricultural industry contributes more than \$1 trillion (us) to the economy, employs over 6.5 million people, and supports one of the world's most diverse and productive agricultural systems. At the same time, producers across the region face increasing uncertainty driven by extreme weather, rising production costs, labor shortages, market volatility, and emerging environmental risks. The Action Agenda provides a framework for future collaboration and regional coordination to respond to these shared challenges.

Building upon the previously released [Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Research Agenda](#), the Action Agenda recognizes that strong agricultural outcomes depend on

both economic and environmental factors. Developed by a multi-State and Provincial Committee composed of experts from the Departments and Ministries of Agriculture, the Agenda builds on existing efforts by States, Provinces, universities, non-profit organizations, and other institutions to advance sustainable agriculture.

“The Regional Action Agenda harnesses the full strength and shared advantages of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region to advance agriculture in ways no single state or province could achieve alone,” **said Dr. Tim Boring, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Chair of the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative.** “Our region has always been defined by bold leadership and a commitment to collective progress, and this initiative is yet another powerful example of what we can accomplish together.”

The Action Agenda prioritizes coordinated actions that can help advance agricultural productivity, profitability, and environmental performance throughout the region.

The Agenda outlines three priority goals:

- **Soil Health** to expand adoption of conservation practices that improve soil health and support agricultural productivity, resilience, and long-term performance of farming.
- **Healthy Economy** to better understand economic outcomes, expand market opportunities, and strengthen the viability of sustainability-focused programs and farm-level profitability.
- **Innovation and Technology** to support adoption of technologies that improve productivity, environmental performance, quality of life, labor efficiency, and farm profitability.

Beginning in September 2026, GSGP, in collaboration with the State and Provincial Departments and Ministries of Agriculture, will undertake a formal process to identify partner institutions that are well positioned to coordinate and lead identified actions.

About GSGP (www.gsgp.org)

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 \$9.3 trillion (US) economy and protect the world’s largest system of surface fresh water.

QUOTES FROM SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

“By working together across state lines and national borders, we can strengthen agriculture through a collective approach that enables shared expertise, innovation, and supports more resilient, sustainable agricultural systems,” **said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture.** “The Action Agenda provides a critical framework for our efforts, and we look forward to meaningful and productive collaboration.”

“We are eager to join GSGP’s efforts to build a more robust agricultural industry throughout the Great Lakes Region,” **said Brian Baldridge, Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture.** “The priorities established in the Action Agenda align well with ODA’s existing H2Ohio program goals and lay the foundation for a strong partnership focused on improving soil health and water quality. This collaboration will provide additional tools for ODA and agricultural producers to implement production practices that result in a more resilient agricultural industry and support Ohio’s economy.”

“The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Initiative brings us together to strengthen food security across the region,” **said Sam Oosterhoff, Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.** “Through the Action Agenda, we are advancing agricultural innovation, productivity and resilience to support good-paying jobs, strengthen our economies and ensure a reliable food supply for generations to come.”

“As the Keystone State, we were proud to welcome the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers under Governor Shapiro’s leadership as chair as we advance the Sustainable Agriculture Actions agenda,” **said Russell Redding, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.** “For our farmers, this is about turning shared commitments into real solutions, working across borders to support resilience, and protecting our natural resources to ensure long-term farm viability.”

“Québec is proud to support this regional action plan aiming to advance sustainable agriculture in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region,” **said Donald Martel, ministre de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec.** “It will make it possible to zero in on the issues and advance thinking on innovative, real-world solutions, in particular for soil health, economic development, and innovation and new technologies in agriculture.”

“Sustainability and conservation of our soil and water resources have long been a priority for Wisconsin,” said **Randy Romanski, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**. “Through this collaborative partnership, we’re able to widen the positive impact our states and provinces are having on agriculture across the Great Lakes region.”

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