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On behalf of the Council of Great Lakes Governors  
Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Meeting  
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- Good afternoon. I'm Todd Ambs and I am the Water Division Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I am here today on behalf of the Council of Great Lakes Governors and its Chair, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle.
- The Council of Great Lakes Governors has been coordinating the Governors' shared efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. The Governors' recognize that this effort is critically important for protecting our environment and promoting our economy, both regionally and nationally.
- About two years ago, we celebrated the promise of an unprecedented strategy to protect and restore the Great Lakes. The process was initiated by President Bush and included our regional leaders—Governors, Mayors, Members of Congress and Tribal leaders—as well as non-governmental groups and hundreds of committed citizens.
- The process united us as never before toward our shared goal of protecting and restoring our nation's water belt--the Great Lakes.
- And, it provided a shared vision of near-term steps that could put us on a path toward a restored water belt--a healthy water belt to power our nation's economy and support a robust environment.
- During the past two years, we have made progress toward our shared vision. Yet, the promise of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration remains largely unfulfilled. Governor Doyle has independently, and collectively with the other Governors through the Council of Great Lakes Governors, urged Congress to act and give us the means to move the Strategy from a vision to a reality. We are disappointed in the lack of follow-through by the federal government.
- Although there have been disappointments, there have also been successes. And, I'd like to first talk about those areas where we have been most successful.
- As a result of the Governors' leadership, the Great Lakes States have made significant progress to help protect and restore the Great Lakes.
  - The Great Lakes States have begun ratifying the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. Once fully implemented, this Compact will prohibit large-scale, long distance diversions and help ensure that our use of Great Lakes water is sustainable. Already this year, Minnesota and Illinois have passed the Compact into law, and further action is anticipated in the other States this

fall and next year. We look forward to seeking Congress's approval to the Compact.

- The States continue to invest heavily in Great Lakes protection and restoration. As the Government Accountability Office documented in 2003, and as our own internal reporting has showed, State spending on Great Lakes programs continues to significantly outpace the federal investment.
- The Governors have been putting the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy into action through innovative State programs that are creating results in the water and on the ground.
  - In my home State of Wisconsin, under Governor Doyle's leadership:
    - We have continued to embrace the spirit of the collaboration process to build on existing partnerships and to find new partners to tackle the priority restoration and protection issues. I am pleased to say over the last two years we have enjoyed an excellent and exciting partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as we together have taken on wetland protection and restoration. In the past two years, we together with our other partners have been able to direct damage assessment funds to protect and restore over 10,000 acres of wetlands in the Lake Michigan basin.
    - We have expanded the collaborative efforts to also begin a wetland restoration project in the Milwaukee River basin with the combined efforts of federal and State agencies, local governments and private organizations.
    - In Green Bay, we have joined with local governments and the dental trade association to provide cost-share incentives to accelerate installation of mercury separators and reduce the potential for entry into the Lake Michigan food chains.
    - In Milwaukee, we are working with the Port Authority to investigate the feasibility of shore-based ballast water treatment as an alternative means of protecting State waters from releases of exotic species. State and local interests are anxiously awaiting this evaluation to see if other approaches could be used while we wait for federal standards. The study will be completed later this month.
    - To increase CREP enrollments into the riparian buffer programs, we met with the other State, federal and local agencies and, based on the tributary restoration goals of the strategy, developed a shared initiative to protect our Lake Michigan tributaries. This initiative has resulted in miles of shoreline protection that will help reduce pollutants and increase habitat quality for Lake Michigan.

- Other States have similarly made significant progress in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. In Illinois, under Governor Blagojevich's leadership:
  - The State has adopted one of the toughest rules in the nation for controlling mercury emissions from power plants, requiring a 90% reduction by 2009. Illinois' rule far surpasses federal requirements. Illinois has also negotiated the shut down of some old, inefficient coal power units, including one on the shore of Lake Michigan that closed earlier this year. These actions will help reduce mercury contamination of Great Lakes fish.
  - The state of Illinois has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in loans and grants for infrastructure to reduce combined sewer overflows in the Lake Michigan basin including: the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, also known as "Deep Tunnel Project."
  - The state of Illinois has spent millions of dollars for evaluation and restoration activities in the Lake Michigan basin including: assessment of Lake Michigan water quality and fish samples; evaluation and restoration of Chicago Park District lagoons and Wolf Lake, and identification of e-coli sources at Lake Michigan beaches; Roof Greening Technology demonstrations; Waukegan River ecological and habitat restoration projects; GIS mapping tools; Waukegan River National Monitoring Strategy Project; remediation planning for the Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern; and pollution prevention assistance to industries in the Lake Michigan Basin.
  
- In Indiana, under the leadership of Governor Daniels:
  - The State has acquired and is restoring hundreds of acres of property in the Great Lakes area. These property acquisitions have been accomplished in partnership with organizations such as the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Save the Dunes Council. Some of this property has increased fishing opportunities; some has increased the size of the Dunes National Lakeshore; and, some has ensured the preservation of rare and endangered ecosystems in Northwest Indiana.
  - The Indiana Departments of Environmental Management and Natural Resources have entered into a partnership with EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office and the City of Hammond to dredge and restore a portion of the West Branch of the Grand Calumet River. This project will also include source control of the Hammond Sanitary District's combine sewer overflows. This project is currently in the second phase of dredging design. IDEM and DNR are also finishing a feasibility study with the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge and restore the East Branch of the Grand Calumet River and non-navigational portions of the Indiana

Harbor Ship Canal. The remedial alternatives for this project will be presented to the public for review and comment in November of 2007 and to US Army Corps of Engineers' Headquarters for funding in March of 2008. US Steel continues to perform its dredging and restoration project in the first five miles of the Grand Calumet River.

- Indiana has 20 communities with combined sewer system overflows in the Great Lakes basin. Of the 20 communities, Indiana has:
  - reviewed and approved 12 Long Term Control Plans (LTCPs);
  - entered into State Judicial Agreements with 3 communities for the revision and/or implementation of the LTCPs; and,
  - participated in federal consent decree discussions for LTCPs in 5 communities.
  
- In Michigan, under Governor Granholm's leadership:
  - The Governor signed bipartisan legislation to protect Michigan waters from non-native aquatic invasive species (AIS) introductions from the ballast water of oceangoing. Ballast water discharges are required to be treated by methods determined by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to be effective in preventing the discharge of AIS. MDEQ will continue to require permits for oceangoing vessels and in the absence of protective federal policies, encourages other Great Lakes States to enact laws to regulate ballast water discharges and further protect the Great Lakes from AIS.
  - 2007 is the 20th anniversary of the Amendments to the United States/Canadian Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement that established the Great Lakes Area of Concern program. In 2006, the MDEQ published a delisting guidance document for its 14 Areas of Concern to determine the steps needed to assure that beneficial uses are restored and removed. Restoring the beneficial uses will lead to delisting an AOC. The delisting guidance, in combination with concerted action by the PACs, local stakeholders, and government agencies has led, in part, to the removal of three beneficial use impairments to date--one each in Torch Lake, Deer Lake, and the Manistique River. Work is ongoing in removing several more.
  - In 1998, the citizens of Michigan made the quality of the State's environment a priority by providing funding for the investigation and remediation of contaminated sediments in Michigan lakes, rivers and streams. Working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office in conjunction with the federal Great Lakes Legacy Act, Michigan has completed remediation of contaminated sediment in the Black

Lagoon in the Trenton Channel in the Detroit River Area of Concern; Ruddiman Creek in the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern; and, the St. Marys River Area of Concern. Also, a sediment remediation project is currently on-going in the Kalamazoo River AOC.

- With over 2500 dams, Michigan is facing an infrastructure crisis of dam failure over the next decade. Many dams have outlived their usefulness and because they provide no economic return, are often neglected. Dam removals provide many benefits, including: improved public health and safety; improved water quality and aquatic habitat; improved recreational opportunities; reduced maintenance costs; and, restoration of fish passage and fisheries productivity. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and MDEQ have been working collaboratively to assist dam owners by developing web-based guidance for owners and have provided technical expertise to design and conduct dam removals that minimize adverse environmental impacts. Since 2005, almost \$4 million has been committed to remove seven dams in the State.
  - In February 2006, Michigan adopted legislation that addresses large-quantity water withdrawals. For the first time in Michigan, owners of water withdrawal facilities are required to protect surface water bodies such as lakes and streams from Adverse Resource Impacts (ARI), defined as "decreasing the flow of a stream by part of the index flow such that the stream's ability to support characteristic fish populations is functionally impaired." Following passage of the legislation, an intense 18-month work effort helped develop a water withdrawal assessment tool. The tool is a combination of several models involving surface water hydrology, groundwater hydrology and a model predicting the biological response of fish populations to flow reductions in streams. Michigan is fortunate to be rich in water resources. By assuring that water withdrawals do not create ARIs to the State's waters, good stewardship is practiced for all the various and competing uses of water that enhance our economy and provide a high quality of life.
- In Minnesota, under Governor Pawlenty's leadership:
    - Minnesota expanded its mercury legislation to phase out the sale of most mercury-containing products, remove mercury from all pre-K through 12 schools within two and a half years, and strengthen public outreach and collection programs for products still in use.
    - Governor Pawlenty's Next Generation Energy Initiative resulted in new legislation in 2007. The first law established the nation's strongest renewable energy standard which requires energy companies to provide 25 percent of power from renewable sources

by 2025. A second new law puts Minnesota squarely at the front of States leading the way toward our nation's energy future. The legislation will increase energy efficiency, expand community based energy development and establish a statewide goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- In 2007, Governor Pawlenty also signed a new law for the collection and recycling of video display devices sold to households/consumers: televisions, computer monitors and laptop computers. Manufacturers of video display devices will register and pay a fee to the State, and collect and recycle that equipment for Minnesota consumers.
  - The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency prepared a Statewide mercury Total Maximum Daily Load. In 2007, it became the first Statewide mercury TMDL approved by the USEPA. The TMDL calls for a 93% reduction of mercury emissions.
  - The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Department of Natural Resources have teamed together to administer an open-burning abatement grant program to identify and assist projects that reduce the practice of on-site garbage burning in burn barrels, fire-pits, stoves, heaters and other similar means. This 2007 grant program aims to encourage the use of sanitation facilities in place of burn barrels to dispose of garbage and to increase recycling and composting.
- In New York, under the leadership of Governor Spitzer:
    - Less than 8 months following the GLRC strategy's adoption, NY completed remaining restoration efforts needed to successfully delist the Oswego River AOC - the first AOC delisted on the U.S. side of basin.
    - The State has been focusing on aligning its new Ocean - Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation and Management initiative with the objectives of the eight priorities contained in the GLRC Strategy. Over \$6 million has been invested in this effort since 2006.
  - In Ohio, under Governor Strickland's leadership:
    - The dredging of approximately 600,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from the Ashtabula River Area of Concern is almost complete. After years of planning, building partnerships and securing commitments, the passage of the Great Lakes Legacy Act provided the final tool for the dredging to actually happen. This project was a true collaboration of federal, State and local efforts.
    - Led by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission, the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program features a regional focus in land use planning by creating local watershed planning partnerships to designate Priority

Conservation Areas and Priority Development Areas. Currently, there are 4 pilot projects in the Lake Erie basin. The Program recommends model regulations for local adoption to promote best local land use practices that minimize impact on water quality and provide for well-planned development efficiently served by infrastructure. The Program is working to align state policies, incentives, funding, and other resources to support watershed-based balanced growth planning and implementation.

- In Pennsylvania, under Governor Rendell's leadership:
  - Pennsylvania is progressing toward fully delisting Presque Isle Bay as an Area of Concern--the restrictions on dredging activities impairment has been removed and significant progress is being made on removing the fish tumors and other deformities impairment.
  - Pennsylvania has developed and received federal approval of its AIS Management Plan. Starting from a Great Lakes focus, Pennsylvania's AIS efforts now include a statewide Zebra Mussel monitoring network.
- More broadly, we have also made some modest progress in testing new ways of working with one another through the joint initiatives pursued through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. As described by the other speakers, these initiatives have helped to address mercury pollution, aquatic invasive species and wetland restoration. We look forward to building on these initiatives in coming months.
- Beyond this, I commend the other governments represented here today for the progress that they have made. We collectively celebrate our progress and the leadership that has made that progress possible. Our shared vision depends on leadership by all levels of government and other partners.
- While the spirit to work together on our shared vision is strong in our region, we cannot succeed without more help from Washington. So while I am pleased to announce our successes, I remain frustrated by the lack of national attention to protect the greatest freshwater system on earth. Fundamentally, we must see bolder action by our federal partners.
  - Despite years of urging by the Governors and others, Congress has been unable to take the needed steps to comprehensively protect the Great Lakes from aquatic invasive species.
  - Further, to date the federal government has been unable to adequately fund the Asian carp barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Recent Congressional passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that would take care of this problem is encouraging. But, delays over the past several years and President Bush's recent veto of WRDA frustrating. Considering the relatively modest cost of this project, the lack of federal

leadership is troubling. It's hard to believe the federal government's inability to spend a mere \$7 million to protect the Great Lakes' ecology and a multi-BILLION dollar fishery.

- More broadly, and across myriad programs, a greater federal investment in the Great Lakes is needed. “No new money” is not an acceptable answer, especially when State and local governments have long been investing much more in the Great Lakes than the federal government does. “No new money” is not an acceptable answer when the ecosystem holding nearly 20% of the world's fresh surface water is under attack!
- The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy makes this point clear—some problems can only be solved through a commitment of greater federal resources. And, the federal investment must be stable and long term if we are to realize real and sustainable results.
- Our region has identified the areas where near-term investments will yield the greatest return. Specific actions can and must be taken now to advance the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy:
  - We continue to seek full funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Funds in order to update our region's aging wastewater infrastructure and stop sewage dumping into the Great Lakes.
  - We continue to seek full appropriations in support of the Great Lakes Legacy Act to clean up our region's most contaminated toxic hot spots.
  - We continue to seek \$28.5 million to begin restoration work immediately of 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin. The States remain committed to working with other non-federal partners to provide an additional \$28.5 million cost-share toward this end. These monies would help provide vital habitat to birds and wildlife, while also helping protect water quality.
- We applaud the members of Congress who have spearheaded efforts such as the introduction of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Implementation Act; funding for critical programs; and, other actions focused on protecting and restoring our nation's water belt. We must do a better job of working together to follow through and advance our shared agenda.
- The 25 million people who live and work in the Great Lakes States are counting on all levels of government to come together and work on their behalf. The many thousands who have invested their time and energy in protecting the Great Lakes expect that governments will respond with meaningful restoration efforts.
- Although progress is being made, the pace of progress has been too slow. The Governors have re-doubled their efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes and we call on all partners to do the same. If we are to deliver on the promise of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and realize a protected and restored Great Lakes, there is no alternative.

- Thank you for being here today and for your continued commitment to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.