Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body
Meeting Summary
June 18, 2025
9:00 a.m. CDT
160 N. LaSalle Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
PLEASE NOTE THAT AS THIS IS A GOVERNMENT BUILDING, IDENTIFICATION AS WELL AS PASSAGE THROUGH METAL DETECTORS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ENTRY.
Remote participation was available to individuals registering at:
https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/ea56a220-1734-4cd4-bea2-1f653326225b@aae478b6-e0ab-443d-bafb-1f1358f6696f
Listening Options at:
+1 213-516-2941
Phone conference ID: 678 095 80#

Notice:
Notice of the meeting was provided to the public through the Great Lakes Information Network's distribution list on May 19, 2025. Notice was also posted to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body (Regional Body) website at www.glslregionalbody.org. The notice included an announcement that the meeting agenda, draft resolutions and materials to be discussed during the meeting were available on the Regional Body's website. Call-in information was also posted to the front page of the Regional Body website.

Call of Meeting:
9:00 a.m. EDT— The meeting was called to order by Loren Wobig, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Ret.).

Roll Call:
The following Regional Body members, constituting a quorum, were present:
Illinois (designee of Governor J.B. Pritzker): Loren Wobig, Director, Office of Water Resources (Ret.), Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
Indiana (designee of Governor Eric Holcomb): Absent.
Michigan (designee of Governor Gretchen Whitmer): Emily Finnell, Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy.
Minnesota (designee of Governor Tim Walz): Jess Richards, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
New York (designee of Governor Kathy Hochul): Karen Stainbrook[1], Director, Bureau of Water Resource Management, Division of Water New York State Department of

[1] Signed proxy forms for individuals participating on behalf of official member designees are available upon request.

Environmental Conservation on behalf of Don Zelazny, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (ret).
Ohio (designee of Governor Mike DeWine): Dena Barnhouse[1], Chief, Division of Water Resources, on behalf of Mary Mertz, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources.
Ontario (designee of Premier Doug Ford): Jennifer Keyes, Director, Natural Resources Conservation Policy Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
Pennsylvania (designee of Governor Josh Shapiro): Tim Bruno, Chief, Office of the Great Lakes, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.
Québec (designee of Premier François Legault): Peter Stevenson, Directeur général Direction générale des opérations et de l'accompagnement des partenaires et des clientèles, Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs
Wisconsin (designee of Governor Tony Evers): Adam Freihoefer[1], Water Use Section Manager, on behalf of Steven Little, Acting Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Actions Taken

Review of December 13, 2024 Regional Body meeting minutes

Mr. Wobig noted that the December 13, 2024 minutes of the Regional Body were previously posted as draft to the Regional Body website. He invited a motion and a second to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Richards to formally approve the minutes of the December 13, 2024 Regional Body meeting. Ms. Stainbrook seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the December 13, 2024 meeting minutes was approved without objection.

Reports

State and Provincial updates on implementation of the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (Agreement).

Without objection, all jurisdictions were granted permission to submit their reports in writing and have them incorporated into this Meeting Summary. A representative from Indiana was also granted permission to submit a written report to be included in this meeting summary after a formal appointment had been made by the Governor of Indiana to the Regional Body. Mr. Ryan Mueller was appointed to the Regional Body as Governor Braun's Designee subsequent to the adjournment of this meeting, and his report is included below.

<u>Illinois</u>

Mr. Wobig submitted the following report:

Lake Michigan Diversion

The Illinois Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program continues to manage Illinois' diversion of water from Lake Michigan in accordance with the 1967 Supreme Court Decree amended in 1980 limiting Illinois' diversion to 3,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) based on a 40-year running average. To help reduce water losses, Illinois is also focused on improving aging infrastructure in accordance with updated community water system improvement plans.

Lake Michigan Water Use Data Collection

In compliance with the Compact, the Department continues to collect potable water supply, consumption, and water loss information from each of its 227 Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program permittees on an annual basis as required by their allocation permits. All permittees submitted data to the Department for WY2018. The Water Years for 2019 through 2021 should be finalized and accepted yet this Water Year. Remaining years are still be received and reviewed by the Department.

Lake Michigan continues to service almost 8 million people in Illinois. Illinois water Illinois' Diversion Accounting is managed by the IDNR and is overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Chicago District. The USACE's most recent certified diversion is for water year (WY) 2019 (October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019) is 3198 cfs with a 40-year running average of 3066 cfs. The USACE has not completed diversion computations or certifications for WY 2020 and WY 2021 because last summer, the State of Illinois raised a concern (via Dr. Garcia at the University of Illinois) at the recent diversion technical review committee over an apparent underrepresentation of the proportion of Indiana water supply pumpages being directed to the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal (CSSC). This flow component has been historically computed by a set of regression equations which estimate the proportion of the Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) discharges along the Grand Calumet River (GCR) that are directed to the CSSC (effectively a proxy for the location of the flow summit on the Grand Calumet River). This flow dynamic condition was observed during a University of Illinois flow study for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Accordingly, a follow up study by the University of Illinois, published in 2021, suggested that the original analysis from the 1990s from which the current diversion computation regression equations had been developed, did not consider a sufficiently high lake level conditions to represent those which occurred in 2020 and 2021. The modeling from the study indicated that it was possible for the flow summit to be shifted sufficiently far to the east to allow all flow from the confluence of the Indiana Harbor Canal and GCR be sent west to the CSSC, also potentially discharges from the Gary WRP (previously never considered as a potential flow constituent). The model's eastern boundary condition did not extend sufficiently far to the east to include the Gary WRP within the domain. Accordingly, the Technical Review Committee required an

adjustment to the flow certification computations to reflect these newly discovered flow dynamics causing more flow from Indiana to be adversely directed to Illinois.

All 19 direct diverters, including the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago continue to submit monthly pumpage reports detailing Lake Michigan water used for Direct Diversion. Direct Diversion also includes releases at the Lake Michigan control structures including lockage, leakage, navigational make up, and discretionary flow. All data collected continues to be submitted to the USACE to be used for diversion accounting.

New Allocations and Requests

Between September 2021 and June 2023, the Department received nine applications for Lake Michigan water allocations from:

- Village of Lemont, IL
- Village of Romeoville, IL
- City of Crest Hill, IL
- Village of Oswego, IL
- Village of Channahon, IL
- Village of Minooka, IL
- Village of Montgomery, IL
- United City of Yorkville, IL
- Pekara System – Lake County, IL

Department orders have now been issued for each of these communities bringing the total Lake Michigan Allocation orders in Illinois to 227. Many of these communities relied on the deep (multi-state) aquifer as their water source historically. The noted orders require any community not already under the 10% water loss threshold, to reduce water loss to less than 10% as reported annually prior to receiving Lake Michigan Water. There have been no new application requests for the past Water Year.

Brandon Road

In collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers and in joint non-federal sponsor partnership with the state of Michigan, construction is underway for the standalone and functional Increment 1 (aka leading-edge deterrents) including sound and bubble deterrent systems and lowering the engineered channel bottom for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project. A great deal of channel bottom rock excavation and stockpiling work has already been completed this year and will soon continue the remainder of the project riverbed channel thanks to the recent acquisition of the remaining riverbed project land rights by the state of Illinois.

Project design work has begun on aquatic mitigation improvements required for Increment 1 construction at the Jake Wolf Memorial Fish Hatchery near Manito, Illinois. This work will include the construction of additional fish rearing ponds and associated water supply improvements dedicated to improved fish management on the Upper Des Plaines River. Dedicated fish stocking mitigation efforts also began earlier this spring on the Upper Des Plaines River.

Design work for Project Increment 2 components including extension of the right descending bank guide wall, additional acoustic and bubble deterrents, an electric barrier, and flushing lock continues internally and soon with the help of outside consulting services, currently out for proposals. The Design team leadership continue to collaborate to address key project challenges including project costs, private land rights, potentially hazardous waste remediation, and project regulatory matters.

The 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA24) changed project operation, maintenance, repairs, remediation, and replacement federal/state cost relationships from 80/20 to 90/10 to match project construction funding cost share changes implemented by WRDA2022. However, this change is only good for 10-years once OMRR&R has begun and then converts back to a 65/35% relationship placing considerable long term fiscal operation cost burdens on the states of Illinois and Michigan. Additional long term cost share discussions among the Great Lakes state and provinces will be necessary to ensure the sustainability and operation of AIS control measures at Brandon Road.

Sustainable Water Usage Governance

Illinois has begun to develop a science based and user driven foundation for implementing changes to the way Illinois manages and protects groundwater and surface water resources via withdrawals and usage across the state. The Joyce Foundation Report. “GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE IN EPA REGION 5, May 2024” noted that unlike the other Great Lakes states, Illinois lacks a comprehensive groundwater

registration, permitting (including an assessment of impacts of aquifer depletion), or regulatory enforcement function. The Illinois DNR Water Supply Program is working to address this matter via eventual improved management of groundwater and surface water withdrawals and usage in Illinois for better protection and preservation of both groundwater and surface water resources.

Coastal Management Program and Shoreline Resilience

The Office of Water Resources' Coastal Management Program (OWR-CMP) continues to partner with coastal communities and Lake Michigan stakeholder groups to advance coastal resiliency, public safety, recreation, environmental improvements, aquatic invasive species control, public education, and economic development opportunities associated with Illinois coastline. OWR-CMP in cooperation with the Illinois Natural History Survey has been conducting biological monitoring of the wave dissipation rock ridges near Illinois Beach State Park to evaluate actual ecosystem impacts and benefits of this unique pilot project. OWR-CMP is in the process of awarding a grant to Illinois Natural History Survey to conduct similar biological monitoring of the breakwaters installed at Illinois Beach State Park in 2024. The monitoring plan was developed with IDNR Fisheries to ensure the study will help answer critical questions about the benefits and impacts of these structures. OWR-CMP continues to collaborate with the Chicago District USACE on the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study and associated local outreach for Illinois.

While Meg Kelly continues to oversee the Illinois Coastal Management Program as its Director, the Office of Water Resources is working to hire a new Program Manager to replace Ania Bayers who is now working in North Carolina.

When current coastal federal funding uncertainties are resolved, the Coastal Management Program will continue grant funding to Illinois organizations for coastal education, recreation, water quality protection, planning, and design and engineering projects along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Finally, the Illinois Coastal Management Program has initiated a project titled 'Combined Hydrology, Water Quality, and Botanical Characterization to Guide Coastal Wetland Restoration and Management that will develop baseline hydrology, plant and water quality information at Illinois Beach State Park to inform future restoration of wetlands and beach plant communities within that State Park.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois,

Loren A. Wobig, P.E., CFM

Indiana

Mr. Mueller provided the following report:

Summary of water use in Indiana's portion of the basin for reporting year 2023

- Currently there are 1066 Significant Water Withdrawal Facilities (SWWF) registered in the Basin.
- SWWF has the capacity to withdrawal 100,000 gallons a day.
- Water use in the Basin for 2023 totaled approximately ~467 billion gallons
    - With groundwater accounting for 37 BG
    - And surface water accounting for 430 BG
- There has been a decrease of about 250 billion gallons of use over the last 5-10 years, mainly driven by Energy Production/Industrial users that have implemented conservation measures or that have ceased operations

- Staff have updated the DOW website with 2023 withdrawal data and have begun compiling water use data for the 2024 reporting year.

Recently, DNR released an RFP and accepted a vendor to complete upgrades to the Division of Water database. Specifically, upgrades to the Significant Water Withdrawal database and the water rights and use program will be addressed. These upgrades will increase efficiency and accessibility by water users and the public.
On April 21, 2025, Governor Braun signed Executive Order 25 – 63 that directs the completion of a Statewide Water Inventory and Management Plan. This effort builds on regional studies conducted by the Indiana Finance Authority and will include development of a statewide planning framework, recommendations for expanding Indiana's water monitoring networks and development of an online water data hub. Input from all water use sectors and the public will be sought, with a final report being presented by December 31, 2026.

Thank you and this concludes my report.

<u>Michigan</u>
Ms. Finnell submitted the following report:

Michigan continues to fulfill all the requirements of the Compact and Agreement.
Michigan Water Use
From January 1, 2025, to May 14, 2025, there have been 153 new large-quantity withdrawals registered or permitted; a 19% decrease from the same period in 2024. Program staff conducted 42 reviews of these withdrawal requests or permit applications, and 111 were self-registered via the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool.

Water Use Advisory Council Report
Michigan's Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) continues to play a key role in water management and water conservation and efficiency in Michigan. The WUAC presented its recommendations to the Michigan Legislature in December 2024. Recommendations include the creation of a new research project to investigate streamflow depletion by

large quantity withdrawals using detailed data collection and modeling, setting timelines and communication guidelines for Site Specific Reviews conducted by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and continuing to advance progress on previous recommendations by providing ongoing funding support for the operation, maintenance, and updates of important scientific work.

Implementation of WUAC Recommendations

Michigan has three projects underway to enhance our Water Conservation and Efficiency Program led by the WUAC's Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee. The Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) is completing a project to identify innovations and technological advancements in water conservation best management practices (BMPs) that can benefit Michigan's water sectors with a focus on business and industry. AWE presented its draft findings to the committee in early June and will present the results of the project to the WUAC in August. Draft findings show there are different motivators and levels of engagement across each industry, and that a challenge to conserving water in Michigan is a perception of abundance among water users. The project team generally found that 2008 water conservation BMPs are strong and still relevant, but there are opportunities to innovate, especially in Michigan's emerging businesses and industries, and to develop more specific guidance for certain types of businesses such as restaurants and hotels. The AWE also highlighted a continued need for general education and outreach efforts to increase awareness of the value of conserving water among water users and BMPs.

Michigan State University Extension hired two agricultural educators focused on increasing educational programming on water conservation and efficiency for the agricultural sector and expanding programming to include animal industries. Educators are releasing needs assessments per agricultural industry sector and participating in numerous outreach events with producers.

EGLE is working on developing a grant to launch a pilot project about water conservation and energy efficiency in irrigation systems. The project aims to evaluate and retrofit existing irrigation systems to reduce water use, increase energy efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Data Collection, Data Warehouse, and Models

EGLE and partners are developing different tools to acquire, manage and publicize water management data.

Work continues to develop an agency-wide groundwater data warehouse. This multi-year, multi-phase project will provide a common location and format for environmental data submitted by EGLE staff and external parties, such as groundwater, geologic and surface water information. Phase 1, which includes the migration of water well log data from the previous database into the new system has started and is expected to be completed by August 2025, with functionality for most users in place by early 2026.

In addition, EGLE and the United States Geological Survey are developing the Michigan Hydrologic Framework. The Framework will act as a model repository and development interface for numerical groundwater modeling. This environment will allow users to either upload and make public or access and download pre-created Modular Groundwater Flow Model package files for external processing.
EGLE continues to support the Michigan Geologic Survey to continue mapping of geology within Michigan, including building out hydrogeologic focus and evaluation of long-term data collection needs. Maps created are accessible to all citizens and come with technical reports that present additional data on groundwater gradients, depth to bedrock, water well locations, and the source of water.

EGLE is also conducting updates to the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool (WWAT). The WWAT is used prior to installing a new or increased large quantity withdrawal for the purpose of determining the potential impact to nearby water resources. The updates aim to improve accessibility to state datasets and depletion estimation tools, encouraging collaborative decision-making.

Outreach and Education
EGLE continues to organize multiple events to address Michigan's education and outreach goals to promote water sustainability and stewardship. EGLE is working on a third phase of the From Students to Stewards Initiative that will extend learning beyond the classroom and provide students and educators with opportunities to engage firsthand with Great Lakes ecosystems to increase Great Lakes Literacy. The activities include creating and administering a small grant program for K-12 schools that supports community-based student water stewardship projects that address local water issues. A non-competitive funding opportunity, the Wheels to Water program, to support educational travel to Great Lakes freshwater ecosystems to provide experiential learning opportunities is also part of this latest initiative.

EGLE also promotes an annual Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week (GLFWW), culminating in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources annual Free Fishing Weekend. This year's GLFWW was from May 31, 2025, to June 8, 2025, and focused on the ways that people are deeply interconnected to Great Lakes and other fresh waters. This week is a time to elevate water resources across the state, encourage people to get outdoors and experience water resources in our state, and get involved in learning more about the Great Lakes and Michigan's abundant water resources and ways to become good stewards. Each year, EGLE partners with other state agencies, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and other partners across Michigan to celebrate this week.

Other Great Lakes Updates
Michigan is continuing the process to delist the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern (AOC). The Muskegon Lake AOC delisting document was public noticed for comment for 30 days starting June 9, 2025. A Public Meeting is scheduled in Muskegon for July 1, 2025. Delisting is expected to occur by September 2025.

Minnesota

Mr. Richards submitted the following report

Overview of Water Use in Minnesota's Lake Superior Basin

- There were 132 active water appropriations in Minnesota's Western Lake Superior Basin, which is an increase of 7 from December.
- We will have a better understanding of water use in the basin and whether public water suppliers in the basin met the drought watch water conservation goals after data has been through QA/QC. We will provide that report in December.
- The Minnesota DNR continues developing requirements for the next round of 10-year water supply plans, which municipal water suppliers serving over 1,000 people need to complete. These requirements will include a focus on water loss prevention and plans for water conservation and water efficiency actions.

Natural Resources and Conservation

General updates

- The 2026 Special Session resulted in two laws of interest:
    - Increasing water use annual fees (tiered by water use with caps also adjusted upward), minimum agricultural use fees (from $20 to $100) and permit application fees (from $150 to $600). The resulting increase in revenue will be used to increase staff capacity for groundwater modeling and permit compliance work.
    - Requiring preapplication information from data center projects using 100 MGY as well as requirements for conservation and efficiency in operation and design.
    - Language for both of these laws is at the end of this report.
- The Western Lake Superior Basin ended 2024 with much of the basin in moderate drought and the rest abnormally dry. As of May 29, 2025, much of the basin remains abnormally dry, with the northernmost portion out of drought conditions.
- The DNR has determined that the climate change impact on steelheads has been significant. Due to the drought flood/cycle we have seen an 80% reduction in steelhead numbers.
- 2024 marked the first documentation of shore spawning Coaster Brook Trout in Minnesota waters, confirmed by Minnesota DNR's fall electrofishing survey. This may help inform future management actions for Brook Trout in MN waters of Lake Superior, such as shoreline habitat improvement and setting seasons/limits
- In November 2024, the Lake Superior Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission declared Lake Superior's Lake Trout populations restored to pre-1940 levels.

- In 2024, the DNR, Lake County SWCD, and Trout Unlimited replaced a culvert with a span bridge over Hockamin Creek in the Baptism River watershed, Lake County, MN to restore aquatic organism passage, support Brook Trout resilience, and enhance infrastructure security.
- In 2024, the DNR, the City of Duluth, and GEI Consultants developed the Tischer Creek Roadmap to Resilience. This project employs U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines to map out a series of over 85 projects to restore, enhance, and protect the watershed ecosystem.

Status of St. Louis River Area of Concern (SLRAOC) actions:

- Minnesota continues to make progress toward delisting the St. Louis River as a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC) by completing large-scale habitat restoration projects and MN DNR's coordination of the AOC program with our partners at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
    - As of 3/31/2025, 65 of 80 (81.3%) AOC management actions have been completed (includes actions that require no further action), and four of nine Beneficial Use Impairments have been removed.
        - Management actions that require no further action (7; 8.8%)
        - Completed (58; 72.5%)
        - Remediation projects in progress (5)
        - Restoration projects in progress (4)
        - Other actions, including studies, assessments, plans, data management and tracking, currently in progress (6)
        - Total management actions (80)
    - Perch Lake Habitat Project was substantially completed in December 2024. The project restored 30 acres of habitat, enhanced coastal marsh wetland habitat and improved flows between Perch Lake and the St. Louis River Estuary by installing an enlarged box culvert, that replaced an undersized culvert, and walking bridge over the enlarged opening to the St. Louis River that resulted from the project.
    - The Interstate Island Avian Habitat Restoration project was completed 2020-2021 as part of the SLRAOC Remedial Action Plan. The MNDNR and partners have conducted post-restoration monitoring of the Common Tern colony (threatened species) on the Island since 2021, finding a substantial increase in the number of chicks per nest and no net change in the number of nests.
    - Minnesota DNR is on track to complete our AOC habitat restoration projects in 2027.

Lake Superior Binational Partnership

- The Minnesota DNR is working with State, Tribal, and Canadian partners through the Binational Program to restore and protect the Lake Superior Basin.

- Minnesota DNR and local partners continue to identify, prioritize, and fund multiple habitat projects through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) that will advance the goals of the Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan.
- DNR and our partners have also received GLRI funding for projects that improve public and recreational access at habitat restoration project sites.

Education

Minnesota DNR continues coordinating project WET and has trained three additional members in the Lake Superior Basin to be part of the statewide Project WET Training Team. Project WET is a resource for formal and informal educators and improves understanding of water resources by providing trainings, educational materials and guidance to individuals or groups by collaborating on watershed events, working on boards/planning groups, organizing and engaging in a variety of community events such as festivals and field days for the public.

For Reference- Water Fees Legislation

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 103G.271, subdivision 6, is amended to read:
Subd. 6.
Water-use permit; processing fee.
(a) Except as described in paragraphs (b) to (g), a water-use permit processing fee must be prescribed by the commissioner in accordance with the schedule of fees in this subdivision for each water-use permit in force at any time during the year. Fees collected under this paragraph are credited to the water management account in the natural resources fund. The schedule is as follows, with the stated fee in each clause applied to the total amount appropriated:
(1) $140 $200 for amounts not exceeding 50,000,000 gallons per year;
(2) $3.50 $6 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 50,000,000 gallons but less than 100,000,000 gallons per year;
(3) $4 $7 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 100,000,000 gallons but less than 150,000,000 gallons per year;
(4) $4.50 $8 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 150,000,000 gallons but less than 200,000,000 gallons per year;
(5) $5 $9 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 200,000,000 gallons but less than 250,000,000 gallons per year;
(6) $5.50 $10 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 250,000,000 gallons but less than 300,000,000 gallons per year;
(7) $6 $11 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 300,000,000 gallons but less than 350,000,000 gallons per year;
(8) $6.50 $12 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 350,000,000 gallons but less than 400,000,000 gallons per year;

(9) $7 $13 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 400,000,000 gallons but less than 450,000,000 gallons per year;
(10) $7.50 $14 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 450,000,000 gallons but less than 500,000,000 gallons per year; and
(11) $8 $15 per 1,000,000 gallons for amounts greater than 500,000,000 gallons per year.
(b) For once-through cooling systems, a water-use processing fee must be prescribed by the commissioner in accordance with the following schedule of fees for each water-use permit in force at any time during the year:
(1) for nonprofit corporations and school districts, $200 per 1,000,000 gallons; and
(2) for all other users, $420 per 1,000,000 gallons.
(c) The fee is payable based on the amount of water appropriated during the year and, except as provided in paragraph (f), the minimum fee is $100.
(d) For water-use processing fees other than once-through cooling systems:
(1) the fee for a city of the first class may not exceed $250,000 $325,000 per year;
(2) the fee for other entities for any permitted use may not exceed:
(i) $60,000 $75,000 per year for an entity holding three or fewer permits;
(ii) $90,000 $125,000 per year for an entity holding four or five permits; or
(iii) $300,000 $400,000 per year for an entity holding more than five permits;
(3) the fee for agricultural irrigation may not exceed $750 $1,500 per year;
(4) the fee for a municipality that furnishes electric service and cogenerates steam for home heating may not exceed $10,000 for its permit for water use related to the cogeneration of electricity and steam;
(5) the fee for a facility that temporarily diverts a water of the state from its natural channel to produce hydroelectric or hydromechanical power may not exceed $5,000 per year. A permit for such a facility does not count toward the number of permits held by an entity as described in this paragraph; and
(6) no fee is required for a project involving the appropriation of surface water to prevent flood damage or to remove floodwaters during a period of flooding, as determined by the commissioner.
(e) Failure to pay the fee is sufficient cause for revoking a permit. A penalty of ten percent per month calculated from the original due date must be imposed on the unpaid balance of fees remaining 30 days after the sending of a second notice of fees due. A fee may not be imposed on an agency, as defined in section 16B.01, subdivision 2, or federal governmental agency holding a water appropriation permit.
(f) The minimum water-use processing fee for a permit issued for irrigation of agricultural land is $20 $100 for years in which:
(1) there is no appropriation of water under the permit; or
(2) the permit is suspended for more than seven consecutive days between May 1 and October 1.
(g) The commissioner shall waive the water-use permit fee for installations and projects that use stormwater runoff or where public entities are diverting water to treat a water quality issue and returning the water to its source without using the water for any other

purpose, unless the commissioner determines that the proposed use adversely affects surface water or groundwater.

(h) A surcharge of $50 per million gallons in addition to the fee prescribed in paragraph (a) shall be is applied to the volume of water used in each of the months of May, June, July, August, and September that exceeds the volume of water used in January for municipal water use, irrigation of golf courses, and landscape irrigation. The surcharge for municipalities with more than one permit shall be is determined based on the total appropriations from all permits that supply a common distribution system.

EFFECTIVE DATE.

This section is effective January 1, 2026.

Sec. 16.

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 103G.301, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2.

Permit application and notification fees.

(a) A fee to defray the costs of receiving, recording, and processing must be paid for a permit application authorized under this chapter, except for a general permit application, for each request to amend or transfer an existing permit, and for a notification to request authorization to conduct a project under a general permit. Fees established under this subdivision, unless specified in paragraph (c), must comply with section 16A.1285.

(b) Proposed projects that require water in excess of 100 million gallons per year must be assessed fees to recover the costs incurred to evaluate the project and the costs incurred for environmental review. Fees collected under this paragraph must be credited to an account in the natural resources fund and are appropriated to the commissioner.

(c) The fee to apply for a permit to appropriate water, in addition to any fee under paragraph (b), is $150 $600. The application fee for a permit to construct or repair a dam that is subject to a dam safety inspection, to work in public waters, or to divert waters for mining must be at least $1,200, but not more than $12,000. The fee for a notification to request authorization to conduct a project under a general permit is $400, except that the fee for a notification to request authorization to appropriate water under a general permit is $100.

From <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/1/>

Sec. 3.

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 103G.265, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 5.

Preapplication evaluation of certain water appropriation projects.

(a) This subdivision applies to a data center, as defined in section 216B.02, subdivision 11, whose proposed consumptive use exceeds 100,000,000 gallons per year and which requires a

permit
amendment or a new individual permit.

(b) In response to a contact from a data center regarding a project that is likely to be subject to this subdivision, the department may request preapplication information from the

New York

New York State's water withdrawal program continues to comply with the compact and regional agreement.

The Division of Water currently regulates permit or registration of all water withdrawal systems with the capacity to withdraw 100,000 gallons per day or more from either surface or groundwater sources within the basin. For all types of withdrawal facilities, each application requires a submittal of a water conservation plan which includes at a minimum, metering, watering, auditing, excuse me, leak detection, prepare and outdoor water use management for public water suppliers.

All registered and permitted facilities are required to submit an annual water withdrawal report to Dec, and this includes over 700 actively reporting facilities within the Great Lakes Sten. So far in 2025, Dec has issued 50 water withdrawal permits, statewide with twenty of those permits located within the Great Lakes basin.

New York also continues to improve data, water, data quality and the type of data that is made available to the public. Our water withdrawal, spatial information and individual water well information is available on New York State Dec's Info locator map. We also have data available through New York State's open data platform.

Most of New York's 2024 annual water withdrawal reports have been received.
As in previous years, our water withdrawal data will be shared with the Great Lakes Commission and relayed to this group in December.

We are continuing to update our database and QAQC the annual report reporting data as necessary.

In New York from November 2024 through January 2025, much of the state had experienced a rapid onset of drought, which impacted individuals, businesses and public water suppliers. New York State DEC works with our partner agencies to track drought conditions, provide messaging to the public, and utilize state resources to respond to water supply emergencies. As of January, New York State is currently in normal drought status.

In October 2024 DEC, Monroe County and the US Environmental Protection Agency and many other other Area of Concern partner organizations celebrated a significant

milestone with the formal delisting up in Rochester, Embayment AOC after decades of work. After many decades of remediation, restoration and subsequent monitoring efforts, all beneficial use impairments were removed.
In September 2024, two beneficial use impairments were removed from a New York State area concerned the fish tumors and other deformities in the Buffalo River, AOC and the degradation of Fish and Wildlife populations was removed from the 18 mile bridges.

And finally, DEC is working to finalize a rulemaking for our part 601 water withdrawal and part 602 Long Island well program regulations. The rule making eeks to clarify current permitting environments, definitions and permitting exceptions. The rulemaking was posted for public comment late last year and will likely be adopted in the coming months.

With that, I conclude my report.

Ohio

Ms. Barnhouse submitted the following report:

Good morning, my name is Dena Barnhouse, I am serving as designated proxy for Ohio DNR Director Mary Mertz, alternate to Ohio Governor Mike DeWine.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Water Resources (Division) is actively collecting 2024 water withdrawal data from its 2,147 registered facilities. To date, 95% of the facilities within the Lake Erie Basin have submitted their reports. The Division is diligently working to gather the remaining data. Utilizing this information, Division staff have commenced compiling Ohio's 2024 Lake Erie Basin water withdrawals, consumptive uses, and diversions, which will be submitted to the Great Lakes Commission by August 15th.

Ohio's increasing water demands, driven by population growth, industrial activities, and agricultural needs, have prompted the Water Inventory & Planning Program to develop an advanced tool for comprehensively understanding water usage. After extensive preparation, the Water Withdrawal Facility Locator Tool was launched in January 2025, providing stakeholders with critical insights into high-demand areas and sustainability concerns. This interactive platform maps registered water withdrawal facilities and includes historical usage data, enabling users to visualize trends, query and download information, create custom maps, and submit tailored data requests. Since its launch, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has received positive feedback from consultants, water managers, and agencies such as the United States Geological Survey (USGS). By making water data accessible and actionable, this tool reinforces Ohio's commitment to sustainable water management, informed decision-making, and innovative solutions for the future. The tool is publicly available here.

Water conservation and efficiency continues to be a high priority for ODNR. Our conservation webpages are frequently updated with current conservation materials tailored to the different

water use sectors. ODNR continues to accept and post submissions on our Water Conservation Education webpages though the available online portal. This year, the Water Inventory and Planning Program launched the Ohio Water Conservation Excellence Awards to recognize water users in the Water Withdrawal Facilities Registration (WWFR) Program who have taken on the challenge of advancing water protection, education, and justice in the state. The award honors those who have gone above and beyond in supporting water conservation activities, so their successes can serve as a benchmark to their peers and as a goal for other industries to achieve. Nominations were received from the industrial, agricultural, golf course, and public supply industries from central, southwest, and northeast Ohio. Applications will be reviewed, and winners will be announced July 1st.

As Ohio continues to emerge as a leader in economic and industrial growth, the Division has proactively taken steps to forecast water demands over the next 30 years. In collaboration with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, ODNR has completed a comprehensive water study in the central Ohio region. This regional water use study examined water availability and demand, projected future demand, provided regionalization recommendations, explored water reuse opportunities, and offered assistance to economic developers in siting locations for high-capacity users. The online dashboard and related technical information are now live and available for public use here.

In 2024, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sponsored a bid to establish Ohio's Water Reuse Section through the WateReuse Association's national board. The board approved Ohio's charter, making it the first Midwest state to join the national organization. WaterReuse Ohio fosters collaboration among utilities, businesses, consultants, and academics to share lessons learned, best management practices, and new technologies. The Section is in its final stages of drafting an Ohio-specific Water Reuse Action Plan, which includes rules, guidance, and a permitting structure for utilities and businesses to follow. ODNR joined as a regulatory council member, with John Newsome of the Columbus Department of Public Utilities serving as the chapter's first president.

In 2019, ODNR shared Governor DeWine's new H2Ohio initiative, which is a water quality initiative to ensure safe and clean drinking water for all Ohioans. The Governor, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio EPA, and the Lake Erie Commission, along with many partners have worked together to invest in projects across Ohio that will reduce nutrients and provide other long-term economic and water quality benefits to communities statewide. This program is a comprehensive, data-driven approach to improving water quality and is focused on reducing phosphorus, creating wetlands, addressing failing septic systems, and preventing lead contamination.

ODNR's newest completed projects within the basin:
ODNR's H2Ohio Wetland Program proudly announces the completion of the Clark and Delaware/Horseshoe Islands Restoration Project in Lucas County, Ohio. This innovative project successfully addresses habitat deterioration and reduction in the island complex area caused by erosion, flooding, and other environmental factors. The project provides multiple benefits, including enhanced fish and wildlife habitat in the Maumee River, improved water quality downstream of the project (i.e., into Lake Erie) through sediment and nutrient retention, reduced wave energy along the adjacent riverbank, and protection of recreational resources including a public park and boating infrastructure. Additional habitat improvements within the

island complex were implemented concurrently through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding, supporting the Maumee River Area of Concern. The Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority led this collaborative effort, which brought together numerous local and regional partners throughout the project's design and implementation.

The ODNR's H2Ohio Rivers Program successfully removed over 3,000 tires from the banks of Conneaut Creek in Northeast Ohio, just a few miles upstream from its mouth at Lake Erie. Additionally, more than 14,000 pounds of trash were removed from Lake Erie tributaries by canoe liveries participating in the Healthy Rivers Livery program. These liveries, along with a few new participants, anticipate continuing their excellent work this coming summer. Furthermore, the Rivers Program permanently protected over seven linear miles of streambank within the Lake Erie watershed through conservation easements and the establishment of preserves. That concludes Ohio's report, thank you GSGP and thank you Mr. Chair.

Ontario

Ms. Keyes submitted the following report:

Hello everyone and good morning. I am Jennifer Keyes, Director of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Development and Hazard Policy Branch and official designee of Premier Ford.

- Ontario remains committed to protecting the shared waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basins, with our commitments to the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement, just one of the actions for achieving our shared goals.

- Ontario submitted our 2023 Water Use Report to the Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database last year and are preparing for the submission of our 2024 data. This water use data is primarily sourced through our province-wide Permit to Take Water program, which Ontario presented this past January to the Regional Body Science Team in support of our commitment to continued information sharing.

- At previous Regional Body meetings, Ontario reported the *Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act* being passed in November 2022, which is intended to ensure York Region meets its wastewater treatment infrastructure needs to support future generations.

    - The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks continues to meet with York and Durham Regions on a quarterly basis to discuss implementation of the project and monitor progress.

    - The Project continues to proceed as planned and is planned for three phases between 2024 and 2038.

    - The Ministry will continue oversee the Regions' implementation of the project to make sure the project proceeds in a manner that protects human health and the environment.

- Ontario continues to address commitments made in *Protecting People and Property: Ontario's Flooding Strategy*, including undertaking work to update technical guidance to support municipalities and conservation authorities in identifying flooding, erosion and dynamic beach hazards on the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River System, as well as erosion and flood hazards on river and stream systems.

- Ontario is happy to continue participating in an extension of the federal Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program through March 2028. Through this program, Ontario will receive up to $15 million in federal funding to advance flood mapping activities across the province. Updated mapping supports land use planning decisions that will better prepare the people of Ontario for future flooding and reduce long term disaster assistance costs.

- Between 2020 and 2025, Ontario invested $31 million (CAD) through the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program to restore and enhance wetlands, improving water quality, reducing flood risk, and building greater resilience to climate change.

    - During this time, the program supported the completion of about 590 wetland restoration and enhancement projects covering over 9,900 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes watershed and connecting waterways.

- Ontario is undertaking significant work that contributes to delivering on the Regional Body's Science Strategy as part of its work with Canada to implement the 2021 Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA). This includes:

    - Researching the application of novel hydrologic modelling approaches to simulate historic, current, and future streamflow, groundwater levels, and watershed conditions across the province;

    - Supporting the development of surface water-groundwater conceptual and numerical models at Great Lakes, basin, watershed, and aquifer scales, and the optimization of methods to study surface-groundwater interactions;

    - Maintaining provincial integrated groundwater-surface water-climate change monitoring;

    - And reviewing its groundwater and stream water monitoring programs to identify possible options for expanding its integrated water and climate monitoring to improve water management.

- Since 2018, Ontario has made major advancements in the restoration and enhancement of the Great Lakes, including:

  - Restoration of 33 Beneficial Use Impairments in our Great Lakes Areas of Concern, making them more drinkable, swimmable and fishable, and creating opportunities for economic renewal; and
  - Successful implementation of the Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan (LEAP) to reduce phosphorus loads to Lake Erie to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, in close partnership with Indigenous communities, agricultural sectors, conservation groups and local governments.

- Through our Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network, Ontario continues to monitor and publicly report on groundwater levels at 490 wells across southern and parts of Northern Ontario.
- As you may recall Ontario provided an update at the December Regional Body meeting regarding our proposed Geologic Carbon Storage Act. The proposed Act was first introduced into the Ontario legislature at the end of November last year, however, as the legislature was dissolved in January due to an election all incomplete business was terminated. The proposed Act was re-introduced in the legislature on May 27th and has reached second reading in the house. Given that the house has now risen for the summer, the second reading debate will continue when the house sits again starting in October.
- If approved, the proposed Act would require the development of supporting regulations before it could be proclaimed and brought into force. We anticipate beginning consultation on the content of proposed regulations later this summer. If the legislation is approved, implementation of the framework for commercial-scale geologic carbon storage, including supporting regulations, is targeted for January 1st, 2026.
- Establishing a clear legislative and regulatory framework for geologic carbon storage could provide industries in Ontario with a critical tool for managing their emissions and contributing to the achievement of Ontario's emissions reduction targets, while also ensuring safety to the public and the environment.

And that concludes the report from Ontario. Thank you for this opportunity.

Pennsylvania

Mr. Bruno submitted the following report:

Pennsylvania continues to implement the requirements of the Compact and Agreement through facilitating state and local programs on water use. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is preparing to assemble the Great Lakes water withdrawal and consumptive use statistics for Water Year 2024 for compilation into the Annual Report of the Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database. Pennsylvania currently has no diversions within our jurisdiction. It is expected that Pennsylvania's trend of

annual water use in the Great Lakes Basin will continue into the 2024 Water Year and represent just a small fraction of overall Great Lakes water use.

DEP continues to maintain the Great Lakes Program webpages which include information about the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Compact and Agreement. Resources available on the site include the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Water Resources Inventory and Reporting document. Interested individuals can view registered water users within the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Basin and their annual water use from the 2005 Water Year forward. This document and other information regarding DEP Great Lakes Program can be found at the DEP webpage dep.pa.gov and searching "Great Lakes Program".

Pennsylvania previously reported that DEP assembled a team of policy, legal, and permitting staff to examine regulatory implementation of the Compact in Pennsylvania and the team continues to work toward a potential rulemaking process.

Québec

Mr. Stevenson submitted the following report:

The English version follows the French text

Réalisations du Québec

Rencontre du Conseil régional des ressources en eau des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent - juin 2025

Projet de loi 81

Le ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs a présenté à l'Assemblé nationale le projet de loi 81, dont l'adoption est prévue dans les prochains mois.

Ce projet de loi omnibus porte sur plusieurs lois sous la responsabilité du ministère, et touche notamment les engagements du Québec dans le cadre de l'Entente sur les ressources en eaux durables du bassin des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent. Le projet de loi 81 permettrait en effet d'intégrer à la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement les nouvelles procédures relatives à l'Entente, à la suite de sa mise à jour en décembre 2020.

Ces modifications permettraient notamment de pouvoir exiger un examen régional pour un projet qui implique un prélèvement d'eau de plus de 379 000 litres par jour, lorsqu'il s'agit d'un projet d'une importance régionale ou susceptible de créer un précédent.

Adoption de la Loi modifiant diverses dispositions principalement aux fins d'allègement du fardeau réglementaire et administratif

Le Québec a adopté en avril 2025 la Loi modifiant diverses dispositions principalement aux fins d'allègement du fardeau réglementaire et administratif. Cette loi modifie notamment la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement relativement au pouvoir d'autorisation du ministre de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs sur les prélèvements d'eau.

L'exercice du pouvoir d'autorisation du ministre devait déjà prendre en compte en priorité les besoins de la population en matière de santé, de salubrité, de sécurité civile et d'alimentation en eau potable. Aucun ordre de priorité n'était toutefois spécifié pour les autres types d'usages.

Avec la modification législative, la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement maintient la priorité à la satisfaction des besoins de la population, mais précise maintenant l'ordre d'importance pour la conciliation des autres usages : en premier lieu la protection des écosystèmes aquatiques; ensuite l'agriculture et l'aquaculture; et finalement les autres activités humaines.

Mise à jour du Règlement sur la déclaration des prélèvements d'eau

Le Règlement modifiant le Règlement sur la déclaration des prélèvements d'eau est entré en vigueur en avril 2025 au Québec. Ce règlement vise notamment à faciliter la déclaration des prélèvements d'eau pour les secteurs agricole et aquacole. Ces secteurs avaient auparavant l'obligation de recourir à des professionnels ou des équipements de mesure difficilement accessibles et coûteux pour déclarer leurs prélèvements et consommation d'eau, ce qui constituait un frein important et diminuait le taux de conformité.

Avec la modification réglementaire, les préleveurs peuvent maintenant utiliser un outil d'estimation des volumes d'eau prélevés rendu accessible sur le site Internet du MELCCFP, sans recourir à un professionnel ni à un équipement de mesure.

Ceci permettra d'augmenter le taux de conformité dans la déclaration des prélèvements d'eau en accord avec les engagements du Québec dans le cadre de l'Entente sur les ressources en eaux durables du bassin des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent, et de mieux connaître les prélèvements d'eau en provenance de ces secteurs.

Québec's highlights

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body Meeting – June 2025

Bill 81

The *ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs* presented Bill 81 to the National Assembly, which is expected to be adopted in the coming months.

This omnibus bill concerns several laws under the responsibility of the ministry and particularly addresses Quebec's commitments under the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement. Bill 81 would indeed allow for the integration of new procedures related to the Agreement into the Environment Quality Act, following the Agreement update in December 2020.

These modifications would allow for the requirement of a regional review for a project that involves a water extraction of more than 379,000 liters per day when it is a project of regional significance or likely to set a precedent.

Adoption of the Act to amend various provisions for the main purpose of reducing regulatory and administrative burden

Quebec adopted in April 2025 the Act to amend various provisions for the main purpose of reducing regulatory and administrative burden. This law specifically amends the Environment Quality Act with respect to the authorization power of the Minister *de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs* regarding water withdrawals.

The minister's authorization power must already prioritize the population's needs regarding health, sanitation, civil security and drinking water supply. However, no order of priority was specified for other types of use.

With the legislative amendment, the Environmental Quality Act maintains the priority of meeting the population's needs but now specifies the order of importance for reconciling other uses: first, the protection of aquatic ecosystems; secondly, agriculture and aquaculture; and finally, other human activities.

Wisconsin

Adam Feihoefer submitted the following report:

City of Waukesha Diversion

In 2024 the City of Waukesha diverted approximately 5.04 million gallons per day from Lake Michigan and discharged approximately 5.32 million gallons per day of treated wastewater to the Lake Michigan basin, resulting in a net gain to the basin of a little more than 98 million gallons (5%). The net gain to Lake Michigan was a result of the City setting the treated wastewater discharge pumps to a daily volume slightly over the annual average withdrawal to meet the return flow requirement in the Council Decision. The Wisconsin DNR will provide the annual diversion report to the Regional Body and Compact Council in August 2024 as required by the 2016 Compact Decision. Correspondence between the City and the Wisconsin DNR is available on the City of Waukesha diversion page. Wisconsin DNR representatives are happy to discuss any aspects of City of Waukesha's diversion approval and implementation further with interested parties.

Diversion Approvals

Wisconsin has three other diversions approved under the Great Lakes Compact for the City of New Berlin, the City of Racine and the Village of Somers. These communities are all required to submit annual reports to the Wisconsin DNR these reports are made available to the public on Wisconsin DNR water use webpage after review by the Wisconsin DNR staff.

Water Use

Water use reports for 2023 were due to the Wisconsin DNR March 1, 2025. Ninety-four percent of these reports have been submitted to date, with 71 percent of these reports submitted online. Wisconsin has received reports on more than 14,500 ground and surface water sources. Wisconsin is on track for reviewing these data and submitting the water use report to the Great Lakes Commission in August 2025.

Water Supply Service Area Plans

Wisconsin's implementation of the Great Lakes Compact includes requirements for communities state wide that serve a population of more than 10,000 people to develop a water supply service area plan. A water supply service area plan is a general planning document communities use to conduct long-term water supply planning and to demonstrate that a public water supply system can supply an adequate and sustainable amount of water. Communities are required to have a plan prepared by December 31, 2025. In cases where a community's plan includes an application for a diversion of Great Lakes water or an increase to a water withdrawal permit the plan must be submitted and approved by the DNR. More information can be found at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WaterUse/ImplementationRules

Wisconsin USGS Water Use Data and Research Grant

Wisconsin received a USGS Water Use Dat and Research grant to develop quality control checks to identify, flag, and address outliers within the self-reported water use dataset. The project will also implement automated quality control checks when self-reported

data is entered to identify potential outliers and address those outliers as soon as possible. The project allowed the department to include photodocumentation functionality for self-reporters. The grant also allowed Wisconsin DNR to add historical water use data to the state's water use database and finally provided funding to conduct a water supply service area boundary feasibility study. The feasibility study is intended to determine how much effort is required to obtain, digitize, and store existing water supply system boundaries from Wisconsin's more than 600 municipal water suppliers with a broad range of technical capabilities.

Administrative Reports.

Mr. Wobig invited Peter Johnson on behalf of the Regional Body's Secretariat, to give an administrative report. Mr. Johnson reported the following:

- This is the first time using a new interface for remote participation for our Regional Body and Compact Council public meetings. For those who are online, we would welcome any feedback you may have.
- As you know, the Agreement and Compact require the States and Provinces every five years to submit reports on the Water Management Programs as well as their Water Conservation and Efficiency Programs. These reports are then reviewed by the other members of the Regional Body and Compact Council, with a Declaration of Finding as to whether such programs are consistent with the Agreement and Compact or, if inconsistent, what steps should be taken to bring make the programs consistent with the commitments of the Agreement and Compact.
- These reports have been received and have been posted on the Regional Body and Compact Council websites last December. The members of the Regional Body and Compact Council have been reviewing the reports, with the plan to issue Declarations of Findings in December.
- We chaired a session at the 2025 IAGLR conference in Milwaukee focusing on Agricultural Water Use and Water Efficiency in a Time of Climate Change and how policy may be shaped to address these extremes. We heard several great presentations at the conference, including James Polidori of the Great Lakes Commission on new ways the water use database is being used to better inform how, in aggregate, water is being used to support agriculture. Thank you to those who presented this year, and we look forward to next year's conference in Manitoba.
- In the preceding two days, we held meetings of the Science Team to hear from experts on a series of issues. I'd like to thank the John G. Shedd aquarium and Dr. Bridget Coughlin for hosting the first day of meetings, and the U.S. EPA's Lake Guardian ship for hosting the second day of meetings. Much of the discussion was on water use in support of new technological industries, like data

centers, and we really want to thank those who presented and gave us all a lot to chew on. The next full science team meeting will be in January of 2026.

- We also had a meeting with Tribes, First Nations and Métis Communities before this meeting, and were particularly honored to have been joined by Chairman Rupnik of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation who joined us for the Science Team meetings along with several counselors.
- As questions about the details of the Compact continue to arise, we have given "Compact 101" presentations to organizations and answer questions about how the Compact and Agreement are organized, the legal status of the agreements, and how they are implemented. We encourage individuals and organizations that do have questions to please reach out to us if you have questions.
- Interest in how water is cooperatively managed continues to grow even internationally. Emily Finnell and I will both be attending the World Lakes Conference in about a month in Australia to meet with our counterparts and learn about their work and share our experiences.
- These are just some of our more recent activities and I would be happy to share more information about our work with anybody who is interested in reaching out.
- The next meetings of the Compact Council and Regional Body will take place in December of 2025 and will be virtual. The meeting will be noticed in advance of the meeting.
- Thank you to Meg Kelly and David Kay for doing much of the legwork for this meeting. It was truly critical to making these days a success.

Mr. Wobig next noted that these meetings are seen as an opportunity to learn about water management issues in the local communities where these meetings are being held. To that end, Mr. Wobig invited Ms. Allison W. Swisher, P.E. Director, Department of Public Utilities, City of Joliet to make a presentation to the members of the Regional Body.

A copy of Ms. Swisher's powerpoint presentation is available upon request.

Opportunity for public comments.
Members of the public were given an opportunity to ask questions or provide comments.

Praveen Kumar, Executive Director for the Prairie Research Institute. Mr. Kumar made an oral presentation and submitted the following comments requesting that they be included in the meeting summary, which was approved without objection.

Good morning, members of the Great Lakes Compact Council, esteemed colleagues, and dedicated partners in stewardship of the Great Lakes Basin.

My name is Dr. Praveen Kumar, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Prairie Research Institute (PRI) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. It is an honor to speak before this Council today and to share the work we are doing to support the sustainability, resilience, and informed governance of the Great Lakes region through science.

The Prairie Research Institute is home to Illinois' State Scientific Surveys — the Geological, Water, Natural History, and Archaeological Surveys, and the Sustainable Technology Center — and together, we form a unique interdisciplinary research organization that addresses real-world challenges through applied science. Our charge, as outlined by state statute, is to serve the people and environment of Illinois through research, scientific support, and education. However, the nature of the work we do — in hydrology, geology, ecology, climate adaptation, and cultural resource management — increasingly connects us to regional, national, and international priorities, especially those concerning the Great Lakes.

As all of you know, the Great Lakes represent one of the most critical freshwater systems in the world. They support 40 million people across the U.S. and Canada, and they are facing complex stressors— from fluctuating water levels and invasive species to aging infrastructure, nutrient loading, climate volatility, and, now, the emerging demands of a rapidly expanding digital economy.

PRI's Expanding Role in Great Lakes and Freshwater Research

At PRI, we are responding to these challenges with a portfolio of research initiatives that bring together observational science, modeling, engineering, and policy-relevant insights. Our work along the Illinois Lake Michigan shoreline, for instance, includes the deployment of High-resolution Time-domain Electromagnetic (HTEM) surveys that image shallow subsurface conditions with exceptional clarity. These data are foundational for mapping shoreline stability, identifying zones of vulnerability, and understanding the movement of groundwater in coastal environments. Such precision is essential as municipalities and planners prepare for increased shoreline erosion and infrastructure risk under future high-lake-level scenarios.

Our observational capabilities also include a network of real-time lake monitoring buoys. In partnership with NOAA, PRI operates two buoys off the Illinois coast, collecting high-frequency data on water temperature, wave dynamics, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, and other key variables. These data are streamed in real time to serve recreational users, commercial navigation, forecasters, and scientific research. We are actively working to expand this network and integrate it with AI-driven sensor platforms and remote vehicles to dynamically map and monitor the nearshore "White Ribbon" zone — that critical but under-studied interface where aquatic and terrestrial processes interact.

Inland, our Illinois State Water Survey supports water supply planning efforts that are among the most comprehensive in the Midwest. Through our regional water supply program, we build watershed-scale hydrological models, quantify groundwater recharge rates, assess aquifer sustainability, and work with local governments to develop long-

term resource strategies. This work has direct applicability to the Great Lakes Basin, where water quantity and quality are increasingly impacted by land use change, stormwater runoff, and consumptive water uses.

Modeling Capabilities for Integrated Basin Management

A central part of our scientific approach at PRI is the use of coupled models that link surface water, groundwater, land use, and climate projections. Scientists such as Dr. Ximing Cai and Dr. Jason Zhang are participating in discussions about basin-scale water modeling. The possibility of pursuing this research could create modeling that integrates hydrological and hydrogeological models with climate and economic scenarios to simulate a wide range of potential futures for the Great Lakes.

This modeling work addresses several key questions:

- What are the hydrological consequences of increasing urbanization in the basin?
- How will climate change alter groundwater-surface water interactions and recharge dynamics?
- Can we predict hot spots of nutrient transport or thermal pollution under future development patterns?
- What management interventions are most effective at balancing ecological sustainability with economic development?

This could be particularly relevant as the region sees a rise in proposals for hyperscale data centers due to its cooler climate and relative water availability. Additionally, Dr. Marcello Garcia at the University of Illinois, as mentioned by Loren Wobig, has identified necessary changes to diversion flow modelling to provide better accuracy and accounting during periods of high lake levels.

Addressing Climate and Coastal Resilience through Interdisciplinary Research

PRI's research is also advancing our understanding of climate-driven change in the Great Lakes region. We are documenting the geomorphic and sedimentary processes that shape coastal change through multi-decadal and paleo-reconstruction studies. At sites like Illinois Beach State Park, our geologists have mapped the architectural evolution of barrier spits, dunes, and offshore sand bars to understand the relationship between climate variability and shoreline transformation. These reconstructions, when paired with contemporary sensor data and modeling, are helping to predict future change under various lake level and storm surge scenarios.

We are also using innovative techniques, such as environmental DNA (eDNA), to monitor fish populations and biodiversity in nearshore and wetland environments. These methods allow us to detect the presence of invasive species, track migratory patterns, and assess habitat connectivity across the land-water interface.

Our ecologists and engineers are evaluating novel shoreline protection measures — such as living breakwaters and hybrid green-gray infrastructure — not only for their ability to dissipate wave energy, but also for their habitat benefits and social acceptability. In some cases, PRI is combining physical modeling of wave dynamics with social science

research to assess the community preferences and trade-offs of coastal adaptation strategies.

Future-Facing Topics: Water, Energy, and the Digital Economy
Later this afternoon, I will be participating in a panel discussion at the SRI Congress hosted by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers. The session is titled *"Preparing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region for the Water and Energy Needs of Data Centers and Artificial Intelligence."*

As many of you are aware, data centers — especially those supporting AI applications like ChatGPT and Copilot — are projected to grow exponentially over the next decade. Hyperscale facilities may consume 1 to 5 million gallons of water per day for cooling, and their power needs rival those of small cities. These demands are especially concerning when layered atop the existing uses of water for power generation, agriculture, and municipal supply.

The Prairie Research Institute is bringing a science-based lens to this issue. We are exploring the water-energy nexus through integrated models that consider thermoelectric power water withdrawals, cooling system design, and potential ecological impacts from thermal pollution.

Our goal is to help shape a sustainable future in which technological growth is balanced by sound environmental stewardship. We advocate for improved transparency in data center siting and reporting, rigorous environmental assessments, and siting criteria that minimize cumulative impacts.

A Platform for Regional Collaboration and Applied Science
What makes PRI distinct is not only our scientific expertise, but our emphasis on solutions at scale. We view the Great Lakes not just as a subject of research, but as a living laboratory — one in which we must integrate climate resilience, equity, technological innovation, and cultural heritage.

We are building partnerships across sectors — with state agencies, local governments, tribal nations, NGOs, industry, and academic institutions — to co-produce science that is directly useful in decision-making. This includes our work on natural hazard mapping, green infrastructure, stormwater management, nutrient runoff modeling, and environmental justice assessments.

Our Great Lakes work is grounded in the belief that science must not only observe change, but help communities and governments adapt to it.

An Invitation to Collaborate
In closing, I want to extend an invitation. PRI is here to serve as a partner to the Compact Council, to the states and provinces represented here, and to the many stakeholders working to safeguard the Great Lakes. We offer an integrated team of experts, a strong

track record in federal and state-supported research, and a commitment to equity and sustainability.

Whether your interest is in shoreline stabilization, nutrient loading, climate modeling, emerging contaminants, invasive species, economic development, or strategic planning for energy-water infrastructure — we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate, share data, and co-develop new approaches.

Thank you for the important work you do. And thank you for your time and attention today. I look forward to continuing the dialogue — this afternoon, and in the months and years ahead — as we work together to ensure the resilience and prosperity of the Great Lakes region for generations to come.

New business.
No new business was raised.

Other business.
No other business was raised.

Adjourn.
A motion was made by Mr. Freihoefer to adjourn. Ms. Finnell seconded the motion. All members voted in the affirmative, the motion was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:05 a.m. EST. The next meeting of the Regional Body will be set and noticed at a future date.

The full text of the materials discussed at the meeting is available online at www.glslregionalbody.org.