

Senators Birkholz, Patterson, Hammerstrom, Gilbert, Hardiman, Bishop, McManus, George, Cassis, Garcia, Goschka, Toy, Stamas, Sikkema, Van Woerkom and Brater offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 5.

A concurrent resolution calling for the creation of a Great Lakes Legislative Caucus.

Whereas, The challenges facing the Great Lakes can only be met successfully through a well-coordinated and systematic approach. Issues as diverse as aquatic nuisance species, pollution, water levels, and water diversions and consumptive uses will be addressed in the coming years by dozens of laws and regulations in each of the Great Lakes states and provinces; and

Whereas, Legislation impacting the Great Lakes will be far more effective if it is based on information developed and shared by policymakers from the entire Great Lakes region. An organization to bring key Great Lakes lawmakers together regularly to share knowledge and hear other perspectives would be invaluable in improving the impact and uniformity of practices established in statute; and

Whereas, Regular meetings of legislative leaders from each of the Great Lakes states and provinces will bring many benefits. Regularly exchanging information can bring immediacy to the work of dealing with Great Lakes issues. The current practice of legislative bodies relying primarily on regional forums can be supplemented significantly through a legislative caucus working directly with experts to develop model legislation. Clearly, there will be a stronger sense of urgency brought to Great Lakes issues by a Great Lakes legislative caucus than is sometimes the case now; and

Whereas, Another benefit of a Great Lakes legislative caucus will be a more unified and stronger voice on specific issues. This can only help in articulating the unique situations facing the Great Lakes basin; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we call for the creation of a Great Lakes Legislative Caucus. We call on the legislatures of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin and the legislative bodies of Ontario and Quebec to join us in developing this vehicle to address the many Great Lakes issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the leadership of each of the legislative bodies of the Great Lakes states and provinces, the Great Lakes Commission, the International Joint Commission, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, and the members of the congressional delegations from the Great Lakes states.