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Contact: Carla Vigue, Office of the Governor, 608-261-2162

Governor Doyle Signs Great Lakes Compact

Bipartisan Agreement Provides Unprecedented Protections for Great Lakes

MILWAUKEE – Governor Jim Doyle today was joined by business, government and environmental leaders as he signed the Great Lakes Compact, a historic, bipartisan agreement that will protect, preserve and improve the Great Lakes.

“This historic accord means that we will be managing our Great Lakes water in a sustainable way that will protect one of the world’s greatest natural resources,” Governor Doyle said. “The Great Lakes define this region, and their waters sustain our recreation, our way of life and our economy. Signing the Great Lakes Compact today is cause for tremendous hope. This is a victory for us all.”

April 2008 Special Session Senate Bill 1 ratifies the Great Lakes Compact, which was endorsed by Governor Doyle and seven fellow Great Lakes Governors and two Canadian premiers in 2005. The Compact creates unprecedented protections for the Great Lakes and ensures their continued availability for regional economic growth. It bans long-distance diversions and provides a framework for ensuring sustainable water use in the Great Lakes basin.

The Compact protects Wisconsin’s communities by maintaining each Governor’s veto power, while establishing defined criteria against which project decisions or vetoes must be based. The Great Lakes Compact not only keeps this important provision in place, but does so in a way that sets standards for sustainable management of our waters. It also sets up a reliable system for communities near the basin to receive Great Lakes water. These communities will have clear standards that will allow water use, but prevent the depletion of the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes provide an important economic boon for Wisconsin and the Midwest. They generate \$55 billion in tourism for the region and create nearly \$377 million in personal income from wages and salaries. In Wisconsin, the Great Lakes support more than 11,000 jobs in the state’s ports.

In order to become law, each state Legislature must ratify the Great Lakes Compact and Congress must give its consent. In Wisconsin, lawmakers overwhelmingly approved the Compact, passing it out of the Senate with a 32-1 vote, and through the Assembly 96-1.

Wisconsin joins Minnesota, Illinois, New York, and Indiana in completing their legislative approval. Quebec and Ontario have also approved it. Legislation is moving forward in Ohio and also before Pennsylvania and Michigan. The next step for the Great Lakes Compact will be Congressional approval.

Governor Doyle thanked Senators Mark Miller and Neil Kedzie and Representatives Jon Richards, Cory Mason and Scott Gunderson for their work on the bill.

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