

**JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT**  
**between the**  
**Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers**  
**and the**  
**Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine**  
**on the Promotion of sustainable waterborne transportation**

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence region is a vibrant and sizeable economic area with direct international shipping connections to countries around the world, especially to Europe, which itself is one of the world's largest economies with a well-developed waterborne transportation system and direct shipping connections to North America.

Waterborne transportation is essential to local, regional, and national economies in the United States (US), Canada, and Europe, and is a highly cost-effective and environmentally sustainable means of transporting goods and people.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers are working collaboratively to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the region's transportation system and have developed a regional maritime strategy designed to achieve this goal.

Similarly, European nations have identified waterborne transportation as a critical economic driver and are making significant infrastructure investments.

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine has established, over more than 200 years, a most comprehensive regulatory framework to ensure the freedom and safety of inland navigation on the Rhine River that has been uniformly applied by its member countries and largely taken up at European and pan-European level.

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine, as international river commission, continues to exercise a leading and pioneering role as a center of excellence for Rhine and inland navigation in Europe.

The Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers, for its part, endorsed a US-Canada treaty to harmonize management of the binational Great Lakes St. Lawrence maritime system.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence region and Rhine River region are separately working to maintain and improve aging infrastructure to make their maritime and inland navigation systems more efficient, environmentally sustainable, and attractive to system users.

Both the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region and the Rhine River region serve as aggregation points for the movement of goods to and from central regions of the US and Canada and Europe, respectively, as part of a larger regional and transnational logistics strategy and transportation network.

Both regions are now preparing for the full emergence of smart ship technology and investing in smart port infrastructure, including more efficient docking, loading and unloading, and cargo management systems, improved environmental measures, and various other new technologies.

Recognizing the importance of international trade to shared prosperity, both regions can assist one another to tackle specific issues to drive additional trade through their waterborne transportation systems, through the development of long-term collaboration and ties, including with stakeholders in their respective inland waterway systems.

Therefore, the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine, acting through their secretariats and building on their contacts of the past years, intend to create an ongoing collaboration to promote the sustainable development of waterborne transportation in economic, social and ecological terms, as a dynamic and forward-looking mode of transportation, for the benefit of their respective communities and economies. This collaboration, which should take into account as much as possible the resources available on both sides, may explore ways to:

- Improve and harmonize data and information collection and sharing to better understand system performance and foster the availability of more consistent market insights.
- Improve system governance, regulation and management, including stakeholder consultation and coordination.
- Share information and best practices regarding innovation, including smart shipping, smart port infrastructure, river information services, automation, digitalization and other emerging technologies.
- Build long-term relationships by, for example, inviting representatives from each organization to one another's meetings, conferences and events, and supporting the bilateral exchange of best practices.
- Promote partnerships on issues of mutual interest.

This Joint Declaration of Intent comes into effect on the day of signature.

Milwaukee,

Strasbourg,

For the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence  
Governors & Premiers

For the Central Commission  
for the Navigation of the Rhine

Tony Evers  
GSGP Chair

Achim Wehrmann  
CCNR President