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Sen. Jacque Chosen to Lead Binational Environmental Group Charged with Protecting the Great Lakes

Wisconsin Environmental Champion Elected as Incoming Chair of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus at Annual Meeting over the Weekend

MADISON...During its Annual Meeting in Chicago this weekend, the binational, nonpartisan Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC) elected Wisconsin State Senator André Jacque (R- De Pere) to lead the Caucus as Chair for the next two years. Organized in 2003 around the guiding principle of assuring that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River continue to provide a plentiful source of clean, affordable water to the region's residents, businesses, and industries, the GLLC is the only organization that exists solely for the purpose of engaging state and provincial legislators in policies related to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The Caucus and its Executive Committee bring together members from eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. Sen. Jacque has served ex-officio on the GLLC Executive Committee since 2019 as Chair of the Nutrient Management Task Force, and was elected unanimously by the Caucus along with Illinois Senator Laura Fine (D-Glenview) who will serve as Caucus Vice Chair.

“Clean water is essential to support a healthy population, a thriving economy, and a well-functioning ecosystem. It is an extraordinary honor to continue my leadership in this vital area. I am grateful for this opportunity and to have the confidence of my colleagues across the Great Lakes basin to foster even greater collaboration and success on the issues that affect all our jurisdictions,” said Sen. Jacque.

The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh surface water on Earth, containing roughly 21 percent of the world's supply and 84 percent of North America's supply, and providing drinking water to 40 million people and supplying 56 billion gallons of water per day for municipal, agricultural and industrial use. The GLLC's mission is to strengthen the role of state and provincial legislators in the regional, national, and binational policymaking process by providing a premier forum to exchange best practices, ideas, and opportunities, and by advancing legislation to promote the restoration, protection, economy, and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for current residents and future generations. Senator Jacque replaces Illinois Representative Robyn Gabel as chair and will work with the Executive Committee to advance a policy agenda that focuses the organization's work on water consumption, aquatic invasive species, toxic substances, nutrient management, and climate resilience for coastal communities. Some of the specific objectives include assuring the availability of safe, clean, affordable drinking water; encouraging infrastructure improvements to reduce nutrient runoff, including the installation of green infrastructure; and supporting the sustainable economic development of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence coastal communities, including the restoration and preservation of habitat.

Through its mix of programming (including numerous webinars available on the Caucus website), advocacy, and other activities, the Caucus provides a forum for the regional exchange of ideas and information on key issues that impact the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. More than 560 state and provincial legislators represent districts that lie completely or partially within the Great Lakes basin, though membership in the nonpartisan caucus is open to *all* state and provincial legislators in the eight states and two provinces that share the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin. The Caucus's ongoing work includes advocacy with other Great Lakes organizations on policies and appropriations that will benefit the lakes, as well as the people, businesses, and industry that depend upon them, and also operates the Patricia Birkholz Institute for Great Lakes Policy. Sen. Jacque has served on the steering committee for the Birkholz Institute and as an inaugural Birkholz Fellow. In 2023, the Institute's focus will be helping communities become climate resilient.

(MORE)

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“We all know our environment does not stop at state or national boundaries; nor can we choose between our environment and our economy. I am extremely proud to lead this passionate and dedicated group of legislators working together to protect the tremendous resources of our Great Lakes, just as I am proud to have authored three water quality initiatives this past session that were signed into law with strong bi-partisan support. Protecting the environment is not - and cannot afford to be - a partisan issue. It is an opportunity for us to come together and innovate, sit people down at the table together, figure out what practices work, and let’s implement them,” concluded Sen. Jacque.

The Council of State Governments Midwestern Office supports and provides staffing services for the Caucus, which is funded in part by grants from The Joyce Foundation, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. CSG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving all three branches of state government. As part of its services for GLLC members, CSG Midwest maintains a legislative tracker, available at www.greatlakeslegislators.org, that monitors bills being considered in state and provincial Capitols.

For more information about the GLLC or the 2022 Annual Meeting, please contact Mike McCabe at mmccabe@csg.org or (630) 925-1922, or visit www.greatlakeslegislators.org.

Sen. André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.

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