



# Great Lakes Great Responsibilities

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# Remembering how we got to where we are

- ◆ 1972, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement calls for limits to phosphorus loadings
- ◆ GLWQA of 1978 calls for virtual elimination of PTS
- ◆ GLWQA in 1987 to call for other initiatives such as Remedial Action Plans and Lakewide Management Plans

# Have we reached The Tipping Point?



“The Great Lakes are deteriorating at a rate unprecedented in their recorded history and are near the tipping point of ecosystem-wide breakdown.”

– Alfred Beeton,  
former director of the Great Lakes.  
Environmental Research Laboratory,  
2005.

# Binationalism

- ◆ Do we still have a Binational Vision to coordinate imperatives?
  - *Science and policy advances of the last 21 to 36 years are not reflected in the GLWQA*
- ◆ Threats to the GL are increasingly complex
- ◆ Here is just some of the case for innovating cooperative shared management regimes and resolving accountability matters...

Symptoms of deficits:

Ongoing, re-emerging and emerging  
challenges to the Integrity  
of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem



\$Billions Needed

**Aging infrastructure:  
unresolved**

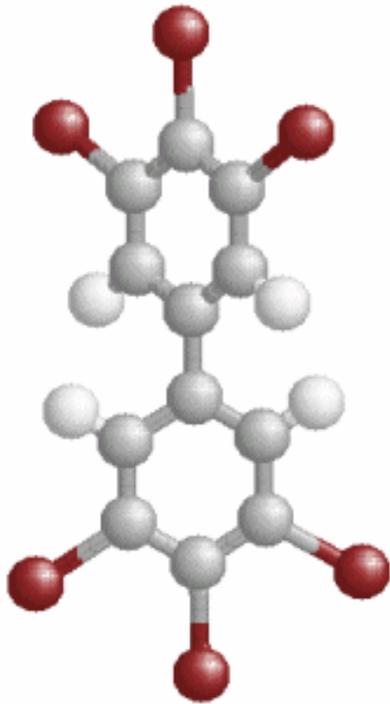
\$\$\$ still needed



Cleaning up Legacy Pollutants

# The New PCBs? TOXIC CHEMICALS

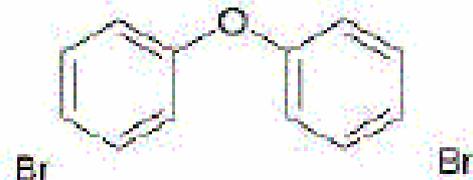
Recurring surprises



Hexabromobiphenyl  
(a Polybrominated Biphenyl)  
[www.atsdr.cdc.gov/](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/)



Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers  
(PBDEs)



# AIR QUALITY/ SPRAWL: NOT CONQUERED

**More cars traveling longer distances**





# Aquatic Invasive Species

**Billions of dollars in damages**



\$15-45  
Million per  
year for  
control

An open door  
policy to  
invaders?



# A changing climate



What can a revised  
GLWQA Achieve?

Vision, Coordination,  
Accountability,  
Leadership...

# We need answers, for our Great Lakes Future

- ❖ Who is **accountable** to the promises made?
- ❖ What are the **roles** for municipal leaders, first nations/ tribes, business, academe?
- ❖ How do we stop reacting to new **variations on a theme**?
- ❖ How does the **Great Lakes community** engage in solutions?



# Innovation and New Remedies:

- ◆ Action plans, Programs and Policies that are
  - Nimble
  - Ecosystemic
  - Sustainable
  - Coordinated
  
- ◆ Approached methodically, thoroughly, inclusively, thoughtfully



# Impediments to progress in the implementation of the GLWQA:

- lack of institutional accountability and responsibility;
- lack of inclusion and engagement of constituent stakeholders; and
- lack of distributive (i.e., coordinated, flexible, adaptive) management and leadership



OPPORTUNITY



# Governments: all orders

- ◆ Focus on a lake-by-lake strategy that includes watersheds, the nearshore environment, and a shared responsibility among municipalities, business, industry, academe, land owners, etc.
- ◆ Build communities that share a common purpose of place-based protection and revitalization.
- ◆ Highlight the importance of the lakes invoking the **economic and social benefits** associated with Great Lakes protection and revitalization.



# International Joint Commission

- ◆ Must be held accountable to their roles and responsibilities in the GLWQ!A
- ◆ GLRO is a creation of the Parties, not the IJC
- ◆ GLRO capacity has been devastated by the section offices
- ◆ The Parties need to review and revise their expectations of the IJC and the GLRO



# The Campaign

- ◆ Demonstrate that the Great Lakes are of national significance in each country to counter the notion that any related programs are regional in nature.
- ◆ Build national strategies for issues of importance to the Great Lakes and finance such prevention and remedial programs in a national context.
  - for example, a national program for water infrastructure for which the Great Lakes region would be allocated a proportion of the funds.



# Profile

- ◆ Recommend to Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada) and the State Department (U.S.) and the offices of the president and prime minister the national and international benefits of having the countries' leaders sign the Agreement.

# pressure on the federal governments:

- ◆ Find leaders within Ottawa and Washington who are prepared to champion an international agreement at the most senior level.

- ◆ Commit to implementation, determine priorities and assign responsibilities and timelines to actions.



# Roles for Academics and ENGOs

- ◆ Document the economic vitality that the Great Lakes Supports.
- ◆ Engage the public's interest by improving communication programs and social marketing strategies thereby creating a demand for political action.



# Interministerial/Administrator body/Third Party

- ◆ Provide oversight on implementation across the Lakes.
- ◆ Establish a binational forum with moral authority to assess progress and serve a reputable “watch-dog” function.
- ◆ Design and oversee binational programs for basin-wide matters that cannot be solved on a Lake scale.



# *A Personal Opinion*

- ◆ Enhance and sustain our Great Lakes through defining and implementing *sustainable communities*
- ◆ Revise the Agreement to ensure civic engagement and human *stewardship*
- ◆ *Renovate responsibilities and accountability* for the Great Lakes in a renewed Agreement



**Persevere, it is Worth Protecting**

# Thanks for Making the Lakes Great

A scenic landscape featuring a large, golden sand dune in the foreground on the left. A calm, blue body of water, possibly a bay or inlet, curves through the middle ground, reflecting the sky. In the background, a grassy dune with some trees is visible under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Questions?

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