



## **WESTERN BASIN OF LAKE ERIE COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT**

**The Governors for the Western Lake Erie Basin States of Michigan and Ohio and the Premier of the Province of Ontario (collectively, “the Parties”)**

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the vital importance of the Western Basin of Lake Erie to the social and economic well-being of the States and Province and the close connection between the water quality of the Western Basin of Lake Erie and health of the entire lake;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that the water quality and environmental conditions of Lake Erie are being impacted by nutrients and other factors to the point that it poses a barrier to achieving the economic value and environmental well-being of the entire lake;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the need to address point and nonpoint derived nutrients, especially phosphorus, and other biological and ecological factors in the Western Lake Erie Basin that may result in impairments to the water quality and ecology of Lake Erie in its entirety;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the Parties’ right and obligation to continue to support efforts under national or binational initiatives and agreements and to individually develop and implement the necessary programs, actions and policies to carry out their commitment to protect, restore and enhance the water quality of the Western Lake Erie Basin and recognize the quantifiable early actions that have already been taken by the Parties to reduce nutrient loadings;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that the goals and timelines are set based on the best understanding of current Lake Erie conditions and processes and will need continual updating and assessment over time through an adaptive management process;

**REAFFIRM** that restoration and enhancement of the Western Basin of Lake Erie cannot be achieved solely by the Parties in isolation, but rather, it is dependent upon the collaboration between the Parties to address the water quality of the Western Basin of Lake Erie;

**CONCLUDE** that the best means to improve and protect Lake Erie’s water quality is through a collaborative initiative between the Parties that has a defined goal, establishes specific implementation plans with time-tables and is measured against expected results;

### **THE PARTIES AFFIRM TO**

#### **A Goal:**

Through an adaptive management process, work to achieve a recommended 40 percent total load reduction in the amount of total and dissolved reactive phosphorus entering Lake Erie’s Western Basin by the year 2025 with an aspirational interim goal of a 20 percent reduction by 2020;

#### **A Base Year:**

To use phosphorus loading data from 2008 to the Western Lake Erie Basin as the basis from which progress will be measured;

**An Implementation Plan:**

Each state and province commits to developing, in collaboration with stakeholder involvement, a plan outlining their proposed actions and timelines toward achieving the phosphorus reduction goal.

*Signed this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June 2015.*