

## **Great Lakes Water Innovation and Stewardship Exchange Engagement Letter**

### **Background**

Spanning eight states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota), two Canadian provinces (Ontario and Quebec), and the traditional territories for many Indigenous peoples, the Great Lakes region, home to 107 million people, serves as North America's economic engine with a GDP of \$6.0T, which, if it was a country, would make this region the third largest economy in the world. The region also serves as the guardian of 20% of the planet's, or 84% of North America's, surface freshwater. Sustaining the region's cities and communities, economic growth and competitiveness, and ecosystems will depend on investments in the sustainable management and efficient use of water resources through innovation and the adoption of technologies, as well as investments in the effective protection of our shared water resources, above and below ground.

### **About Great Lakes WISE**

The Great Lakes Water Innovation and Stewardship Exchange, or Great Lakes WISE, has been established to engage in meaningful, forward-looking multi-sector and stakeholder conversations and research about the region's foremost water issues in order to understand key pressures and opportunities.

In addition, administered by the Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR) through the CGLR Foundation, a 501c3 public charity, and CGLR Canada, with support from The Water Council (TWC), Great Lakes WISE will be a catalyst for accelerating best practices and solutions to resolve the array of enterprise water risks faced by businesses, universities, utilities, and other stakeholders in the region.

Great Lakes WISE, led by business, will also be a forum for bringing diverse interests together to help address the watershed protection challenges we face in a region increasingly impacted by a rapidly changing climate, economic activity and development, and the loss of nature.

Finally, Great Lakes WISE will be a forum for achieving progress on water related United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, particularly SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG14 (Life Below Water).

### **Eligibility for Involvement**

Businesses have the power to lead by example and can move swiftly and with impact, but they cannot solve water issues and risks alone. As a result, all levels of government, academic, and the broader non-profit sector are welcome to join Great Lakes WISE alongside the private sector.

Great Lakes WISE aims for a diverse community of engagement, ensuring all industries that utilize water

in their value chain, directly or indirectly, are represented. Key industries include, but are not limited to, manufacturing, automotive, chemistry, agriculture, mining and energy, tourism, health, finance, utilities, retail, property management and owners, etc.

Any business, university or utility headquartered and/or operating in the bi-national Great Lakes economic region who shares this sense of responsibility towards the Great Lakes is eligible for participation in Great Lakes WISE, given they oblige to the following WISE participant commitments.

By joining the Great Lakes WISE, organizations will actively support the initiative by committing to the following:

- Publicly support WISE and promote it across respective networks.
- Commit to being part of the collective WISE movement and supporting projects and collaborations with time and resources where relevant and feasible for your organization. This means further funding and investments for the identified activation projects that will lead to the transformative change and advancement of corporate water stewardship priorities.
- Commit to the annual WISE participation fee that aligns with the organization category (refer to Attachment A):
  - Large Company (\$10,000/year)
  - Small-Medium Enterprise (\$5000/year)
  - Government (\$5000/year)
  - Academic Institution (\$2500/year)
  - Non-Profit (\$350/year)
- In-kind and/or financial contribution is encouraged to support the development of projects within the first two years of participation in Great Lakes WISE.
- Demonstrate leadership in water stewardship by putting water conservation principles into practice within your organization.
- Alignment with and action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Commitment from the organization's top leadership.
- Adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics and comply with all applicable laws and regulations; commit to anti-corruption and transparency in your business practices.
- Participate in 75% of all meetings.
- Abide by the Chatham House Rule.

### Great Lakes WISE Commitment Form

By completing and signing the below, the applicant organization acknowledges the Engagement Letter and agrees to actively participate in the Great Lakes Water Innovation and Stewardship Exchange.

By signing the below, the signatory confirms they are authorized to do so on behalf of their organization.

#### ***Applicant Details***

Organization Name

Organization Address

Based on the applicant's commitment to water stewardship in the binational Great Lakes region, the organization wishes to join the Great Lakes WISE community under the following category and annual fee, subject to an annual review and renewal:

- Large Company (USD \$10,000)
- Small-Medium Enterprise (USD \$5000)
- Government (USD \$5000)
- Academic Institution (USD \$2500)
- Non-Profit (USD \$350)

The fees will be paid to:

- CGLR Foundation (USD)
- CGLR Canada Foundation (CAD)

The fees should be invoiced as follows:

- Annually in the first quarter of the year;
- Invoiced semi-annually; or,
- Invoice quarterly.

Is your company WAVE verified?

- Yes
- In Progress
- No

If not, are you interested in more information on the WAVE verification program?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable, we are already aware of WAVE verification.

My company has designated the following individual and alternate to represent the company in Great Lakes WISE.

**Principal Contact**

**Alternate Contact**

Name:

Name:

Job Title:

Job Title:

Email:

Email:

Phone:

Phone:

By signing this letter, my organization, in keeping with the obligations outlined above, confirms its commitment to participation in the Great Lakes Water Innovation and Stewardship Exchange.

Signed on behalf of applicant organization:

Signature:

Name:

Job Title:

Email:

Date Signed:

**Attachment A:  
Great Lakes WISE Fee Structure**

The below table breaks down the participant categories and the respective annual fees.

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Category Definition</b>	<b>Annual Fees</b>
Large Company	Private Sector company with >\$1B in revenue	\$10,000
Small-Medium Enterprise	Private Sector company <\$1B in revenue	\$5000
Government	Public Sector: Federal, state, or local agency	\$5000
Academic Institution	University, school, or research institution	\$2500
Non-Profit Organization	Non-business not for profit entity	\$350

Organizations that are not able to meet the above fee commitments but are aligned with the WISE vision and want to support the WISE focus areas may contact the WISE Secretariat, [CGLR](#), to explore options for involvement.