

Clean Energy

Problem Statement: Energy production and use have an impact on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River economy and environment, including water resources. The current national energy mix, which relies primarily on fossil fuels, is an important contributor of greenhouse gas emissions. The Great Lakes states and provinces have joined two different regional forums to address issue: the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (New York, Québec and Pennsylvania) and the Midwest Governors’ Association’s Energy Security and Climate Stewardship Platform (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin). Still, there is no forum to address energy issues for the *Great Lakes region* as a whole. With our state-provincial membership and mandate, the Commission is uniquely positioned to bring Great Lakes states, provinces and other stakeholders together to advance clean energy with a focus on how energy issues affect the water and other natural resources of the Great Lakes Basin.

Goal: A regional energy mix that supports regional economic development in ways that can be sustained over generations without compromising the health of the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River ecosystem.

Objectives:

- With partners, explore establishment of a regional forum that will bring together Great Lakes interests to identify key regional energy issues, and collaborate in setting and advancing clean energy goals
- Pursue projects (funding and/or partnerships) to support development of information (e.g., research papers) on the impacts of energy alternatives on the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River region in general, and water resources in particular
- Facilitate the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative as a regional forum to identify and support a coordinated approach in addressing wind energy deployment and use issues in the Great Lakes
- Participate in and/or monitor clean energy forums to better inform Commission’s work in this area and engage in ongoing outreach to advise our members on emerging issues and implications for the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River

Partnerships: Federal, state and provincial energy, environmental protection and natural resource management agencies; utilities, energy industry interests; nongovernmental organizations and regional and national forums that affect the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River, including the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative; Council of Great Lakes Governors, Midwest Governors Association, and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative .

Evaluation and Metrics: The ultimate measure of success is the extent to which the region has instituted an energy mix that maximizes use of renewable or clean energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Programmatic metrics include:

- The Commission’s renewable energy policy paper was published and next steps have been explored with partners.
- A regional determination was made on the merit of establishing a regional forum to coordinate Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River interests in clean energy.
- Funding was secured to pursue one or more discrete projects that address energy issues and implications for Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River region and its water resources and are of importance to member states and provinces.
- The Great Lakes Wind Collaborative was formed and pursued work to address wind energy issues in the Great Lakes region.
- Commission staff monitored clean energy forums and engaged in outreach efforts to share information on emerging clean energy issues to our members and stakeholders.