

**For immediate release**

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## myBeachCast: Real-time beach data now available via smartphones

**Ann Arbor, Mich.** – The Great Lakes Commission, in partnership with LimnoTech and the Great Lakes states, has developed a smartphone application that provides more options and opportunities for public access to beach advisories and other environmental information.

Funded by the U.S. EPA-led Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the myBeachCast application (app) provides the public with real-time information on beach water quality advisories, weather and water conditions in a form that is location-aware and easy to access. The app allows users to discover local beaches based on the user's location, save favorite beaches, and quickly locate other nearby beaches in the case of a water quality advisory at their favorite beach.

To download the myBeachCast app, go to <http://beachcast.glin.net>. Currently in the beta testing phase, the app retrieves advisory and closure data from the states of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, all of which utilize BeachGuard, a centralized reporting database for monitoring data collected by health departments across each state. Data from the other Great Lakes states will be incorporated in time for the app's full launch in May 2012.

Ohio Beach Coordinator Corey Schwab, with the Ohio Department of Health, is excited about the new app and sees it as a welcome complement to his state's existing beach information resources, which include a website and Facebook page. "I am anxious to promote the app to our constituents," Schwab says. "Offering beach advisory and closure notifications in a mobile platform is a tremendous resource for the Great Lakes region."

The app was designed for the Android platform by LimnoTech, a water resources and engineering company based in Ann Arbor, Mich., in partnership with the Great Lakes Commission and the states. A mobile-enhanced website available on the Great Lakes Information Network will offer complementary information for other mobile devices. Funding is being sought to develop a corresponding native app for the iPhone.

"The Great Lakes Commission is pleased to provide this new service for the beachgoing public and as a tool for the states to better promote our Great Lakes beaches and protect human health," says Great Lakes Commission Executive Director Tim Eder. "We hope it's beneficial not only for the beach management community but also for the business and tourism sectors in our region."

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### Great Lakes Commission

James Tierney (NY), Chair; Tim A. Eder, Executive Director

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Comments and feedback on the beta app can be sent via email to *mybeachcast@glin.net*. The development team encourages the Great Lakes community to download and use the app through conclusion of the 2011 beach season and provide input and suggestions.

Data providers who are contributing to the beta version of the myBeachCast app include the states of Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, BeachGuard, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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*The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by James Tierney, assistant commissioner for water resources at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, is an interstate compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors' appointees, state legislators, and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org).*