

# Environmentalists Praise Bipartisan Bill To Restore Great Lakes

## Measure Would Stop Invasive Species Introductions

Michigan conservationists and environmentalists hailed the introduction of a bipartisan bill to restore the Great Lakes by stopping invasive species introductions, halting sewage contamination, cleaning up toxic pollution, and restoring wildlife habitat Monday, April 10.

"This bill gets it right," said Sam Washington, executive director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. "The bill's introduction is an important step in the long-term and ongoing effort to restore the lakes.

"This bill deserves support from anyone who cares about clean drinking water, safe beaches, and healthy fish and wildlife," he continued.

The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act puts into practice priority recommendations of a \$20 billion Great Lakes clean-up plan released in December as part of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, a planning process established by President George Bush in 2004.

A bipartisan group of U.S. legislators introduced the bill, including

U.S. Senators Mike DeWine of Ohio and Carl Levin of Michigan and Representatives Vern Ehlers of Michigan and Rahm Emanuel of Illinois. Sponsors from Michigan include Representatives John Dingell, Dale Kildee, Sander Levin, and Bart Stupak and U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow.

"The restoration of our Great Lakes is not a partisan issue," said Jennifer McKay, policy specialist at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council of northern Michigan, "it is an issue of urgency. We will work with Michigan's Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress to pass the bill and implement its common-sense solutions."

The bill introduction follows a March 16 hearing that examined the implementation of the clean-up plan. At the hearing, industry leaders, conservationists, and a bipartisan group of local, state, and federal officials urged Congress to restore the lakes without delay.

"The longer we take to restore the lakes, the more expensive the job gets," said James Clift, policy director for the Michigan Environmental Council. "Great

Lakes restoration is the right thing to do for our environment, our economy, and our quality of life."

The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act would:

- Stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species by enacting a comprehensive national program.

- Prevent the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes by authorizing the Corps of Engineers to maintain and operate the dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and prohibit the importation and sale of Asian carp.

- Restore fish and wildlife habitat by reauthorizing the Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act at \$20 million.

- Prevent sewage contamination by reauthorizing the State Revolving Loan Fund and provide \$20 billion over five years to assist communities nationally with improving their wastewater infrastructure.

- Clean up contaminated sediment under the Great Lakes Legacy Act by authorizing \$150 million per year.

- Phase out mercury in products by establishing a new grant program and improving existing



Approximately 60 percent of the nation's manufacturing takes place in the Great Lakes Basin, and ships have played a vital role in moving manufactured goods around the lake. As a result, many invasive plants and animals like lamprey and zebra mussels were introduced to the Great Lakes in the ballast water of foreign vessels, like this one in DeTour Passage in the lower St. Marys River, and moved around the lakes by domestic vessels. The new Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act is hoped to curb the spread of some of the invasives that have become nuisances to Great Lakes communities.

research programs.

- Coordinate and improve Great Lakes programs by establishing the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process.

"This bill identifies the manageable solutions we have to the most pressing problems facing the lakes," said Lisa Wozniak, executive director of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. "The bill's holistic approach to

restoration will lay the foundation for the long-term restoration of this important national resource."

The Great Lakes comprise almost 95 percent of the nation's surface fresh water and supply drinking water to more than 25 million U.S. and Canadian residents. The Great Lakes also support a diversity of wildlife, including a world-class fishery, maritime trade, industry, and agriculture.

"Today, the citizens of Michigan

can be hopeful," said Cheryl Mendoza, manager of Water Conservation Programs for Alliance for the Great Lakes. "We are one step closer to cleaning up the Great Lakes. A lot of work remains, but we will not stop until we succeed in restoring and protecting the Great Lakes for people now and for generations to come."

More information about the bill is available online at <http://www.restorethelakes.org>.

## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



## DeVos' 'Astounding' Ad Spending Boosts Standing

"I wouldn't be surprised if it went beyond \$100 million."

— Rich Robinson of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, speculating on total spending for the 2006 governor's race

In their initial election year jousting, it's the bully pulpit of Governor Jennifer Granholm versus the deep pockets of Republican Dick DeVos.

As Granholm blitzed the state last week (including her third Up North trip of the year, following her 2005 October/December trips to above and just below the bridge) to tout her economic and education initiatives, DeVos ran the fourth commercial of his whopping \$2.3 million TV ad campaign that started February 16.

According to station-by-station buys ferreted out by the non-profit watchdog Michigan Campaign Finance Network (MCFN), the unprecedented early spending by DeVos included \$178,000 in the Traverse City/Cadillac/Sault Ste Marie market and \$66,000 in the western Upper Peninsula.

"What can I say?" Granholm responded when I asked her about the astounding DeVos buy. "It is an astounding figure."

His biggest-ever early buy appears to be money well spent for DeVos, who had been trailing

Granholm by double digits in polling last year and the first months of 2006. However, in a March 13 to 17 poll of 600 voters conducted by Lansing-based Marketing Resource Group (MRG) for *Inside Michigan Politics* (IMP) newsletter, Granholm's lead narrowed to 43-41. A virtual dead heat.

DeVos' best showing was a 47-31 lead in the northern Lower Peninsula; Granholm led 50-28 in the Upper Peninsula. But geographical sub-samples have a higher error rate than the statistical 4.1 percent plus or minus margin of the full 600 sample. Furthermore, all early polling is iffy because voters have yet to tune in.

I chatted with Granholm about all of this last week at Traverse City's East Junior High, where she stressed to Nancy Fitzpatrick's seventh grade geography class the importance of taking mathematics and science classes. She told the class of a visit she made last year to a high-tech enterprise in Marquette, where a worker lamented his lack of early classes on math. (In a Trojan TV interview with ninth grader Dayton Stone, she 'fessed up that "I hated math" as a student.)

But back to politics: Any governor's election-year visit to any school is not just about education. After rapping with students,

Granholm devoted about the same amount of time to a series of pre-arranged interviews in East Junior High's library with three local TV outlets.

"People aren't paying attention," Granholm said when I asked when she would start her own TV ads. People may not be paying attention to the campaign, but they're aware of Michigan's economic grief that will be a campaign issue.

IMP newsletter said "a staggering 75 percent believe 'things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track' in Michigan." MRG pollster Paul King says that's as bad as it has been in state polling.

But is the answer to Michigan's woes businessman DeVos, former president of Amway/Alticor who is touted in his ads as a turnaround leader?

I thought his best ad was the one that called him "a make-it-happen guy" and said "Grand Rapids has turned around primarily because of people like Dick DeVos."

That's a legitimate pitch, especially considering that in 1991 he organized a Grand Vision committee that built on efforts by people like his father, Amway co-founder Rich DeVos. But it was a stretch for the ad to assert Dick DeVos "has put the energy back in downtown Grand Rapids."

As the *Grand Rapids Press* headlined atop its front page Friday: "Visionary or Revisionist? Dick DeVos a major player, but some say ad goes to far."

As for the claim on his campaign Web site that "Dick turned Grand Rapids around," his hometown paper reported: "DeVos chuckled and called that 'a little political license.'"

It's not the first or last political license to be played in Campaign06.

### Miffed Lawmakers

Senator Jason Allen (R-Traverse City) showed up at Granholm's junior high gig and she noted his presence. Yet Allen joined Representative Howard Walker (R-Traverse City) in a subsequent letter to Granholm "to express our disappointment" that her office failed to officially advise them in advance of her visit that promoted passage of the state's new mathematics and other high school graduation requirements.

They fussed, "We are forced to conclude that you are more interested in political maneuvering as opposed to appropriately sharing in this achievement..."

George Weeks recently retired after 22 years as political columnist for *The Detroit News*. His weekly *Michigan Politics* column is syndicated by *Superior Features*.

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.