



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



STEVEN E. CHESTER
DIRECTOR

November 16, 2006

Dear Local Leader:

SUBJECT: Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

I am pleased to announce that through the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative (SBCI), local officials and state agencies have made what I believe is significant progress since we met last August. We are advancing our goal of forging a successful partnership focusing on coordinating regional efforts to support innovative approaches for expanding local tourism and economic development, enhancing resource protection, and improving environmental quality within the Saginaw Bay coastal area. A summary of recent efforts have included:

- A \$1 million project to restore the Kawkawlin River has been recommended for \$750,000 in federal funding by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Local governments and organizations have pledged \$250,000 in matching funds.
- Travel Michigan, in partnership with Shirley Roberts, Executive Director, Bay Area Convention and Visitor Bureau, have agreed to initiate a regional discussion to enhance state and local tourism efforts in the Saginaw Bay coastal area.
- A grant request has been submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to control *Phragmites* on state/federal/private lands, including education, control, and research efforts.
- The DEQ is establishing a science committee, headed by Dr. Joan Rose, Michigan State University, to evaluate potential human health risks associated with the algae accumulations on Saginaw Bay beaches.
- The Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed has agreed to be the lead local agency on an effort to enhance the Saginaw River corridor from the city of Saginaw to the mouth of the Saginaw River.

Accompanying this letter is a summary of the issues and projects identified by the SBCI participants. Included in the summary is a short project description and contact information for people heading up the effort. The issues include:

- Enhancing tourism,
- Improving fisheries,
- Understanding the algae (muck) problem, including evaluating potential human health risks,

SUBJECT: Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

Page 2

November 16, 2006

- Protecting high quality coastal wetlands,
- Increasing access to Saginaw Bay,
- Controlling *Phragmites*,
- Implementing the Kawkawlin River Watershed Initiative,
- Enhancing the Saginaw River corridor, and
- Developing the next meeting of the SBCI.

It was clear from the input received that the communities located along the Saginaw Bay face a variety of significant challenges, both environmental and economical. As you can see, we have already started to undertake activities to address these challenges. We hope that through this state, federal, and local partnership we can continue this effort and have a substantial impact on the Saginaw Bay coastal area.

To move forward in a meaningful way we need your involvement. Please take a minute to review the attached list. If you would like information on any of the activities, including available opportunities for involvement, please get in touch with the person identified as the contact. As mentioned above, these efforts are underway or will begin soon.

More details regarding many of these efforts are now available on the SBCI Web site. To visit the site, please go to the "Issues to Watch" site at <http://www.michigan.gov/deq>.

I would also like to make you aware of an upcoming SBCI sponsored presentation by Ms. Juli Dyble, a biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab. Ms. Dyble will discuss the causes of Saginaw Bay algae. The presentation will be on November 30, 2006, at the Caseville High School, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Thank you for your interest in the SBCI. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Brenda Brouillet at 989-686-8025, extension 8300, or by email at brouillb@michigan.gov, or you may contact me.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Chester
Director
517-373-7917

Attachment

cc/att: Ms. Dana Debel, Governor's Office
Ms. Rebecca Humphries, Director, Department of Natural Resources
Mr. Thomas Hickner, Bay County
Mr. Jim Sygo, Deputy Director, DEQ
Mr. Stanley F. Pruss, Deputy Director, DEQ
Ms. JoAnn Merrick, Senior Executive Assistant to the Director, DEQ
Ms. Carol Linteau, Legislative Liaison, DEQ
Mr. Robert McCann, Press Secretary, DEQ
Mr. Jim Bredin, DEQ
Ms. Brenda Brouillet, DEQ
Mr. Charles Bauer, DEQ