



## Great Lakes Legislative Caucus

# News Release

December 1, 2017

### Sen. Darwin Booher takes the helm as Great Lakes Legislative Caucus Chair

LOMBARD, IL — On December 1, Michigan Sen. Darwin Booher took over as chair of the binational, nonpartisan Great Lakes Legislative Caucus (GLLC). A Republican from Ewart, Sen. Booher succeeded to the position of chair after Wisconsin Rep. Cory Mason stepped down. Rep. Mason, a Democrat, will be leaving the Wisconsin Assembly in January to focus on his new role as the elected mayor of Racine, Wisconsin.

Sen. Booher is the fourth legislator to chair the GLLC since its founding in 2003, when the Caucus was led by former Sen. Patty Birkholz, another Michigan Republican. Minnesota Sen. Ann Rest, a Democrat from New Hope, led the Caucus as chair from 2011–2014. Membership in the Caucus is open to all state and provincial legislators in the 10 Great Lakes states and provinces.

Rep. Mason had served as GLLC chair since January 1, 2015, having previously served two years as Wisconsin's representative on the GLLC's Executive Committee. His term as chair was set to expire at the end of 2018. In October, however, Rep. Mason was elected by the people of Racine, Wisconsin, to be their mayor. Shortly after his inauguration, Rep. Mason announced his intention to resign his Assembly seat on January 15. As a past chair of the Caucus, he will remain a member of the GLLC's Executive Committee until he leaves the Assembly.

In announcing the transition in leadership during the Caucus's quarterly web-meeting on December 1, Sen. Booher commended Rep. Mason for his years of service to the GLLC. "While we are sorry to see Rep. Mason move on from our Caucus," said Sen. Booher, "we're very happy for him and wish him all the best in his new role in the executive branch of government. As the mayor of a fine Great Lakes city, Rep. Mason will continue to be a strong advocate for the lakes."

In a statement, Rep. Mason thanked the members for the opportunity to lead the Caucus. "I am proud of the work this organization has done to keep things non-, bi-, or even multi-partisan," he said. "The lakes need that kind of advocacy if we are to successfully protect them for posterity."

Reflecting on his new role as chair, Sen. Booher said he recognized that he has "substantial shoes to fill" as he follows previous leaders in growing the organization and increasing its profile as a forum for Great Lakes advocacy. "We legislators have an extremely important role," he said. "We have the power to establish policy and appropriate funding for programs that restore and protect the Great Lakes; that provide our citizens with access to safe, affordable drinking water; and that help our jurisdictions sustain existing businesses and industries and attract new ones who will responsibly use the vast resource that we have in the Great Lakes."

Sen. Booher observed that the GLLC had “come a long way” since its founding in 2003, evolving from “an ad hoc group of a few dozen like-minded legislators to a structured, active organization of over 200 members. And yet, notwithstanding this progress, we have only just begun to tap our full potential as a forum for regional action.” Sen. Booher pledged “to continue to guide the GLLC toward a strong future as the only binational, nonpartisan forum for legislators who not only want to learn about the problems that affect our Great Lakes but who are committed to working together to solve those problems.”

Under the GLLC’s rules, the position of vice chair will remain vacant until the Caucus’s next meeting, which is scheduled for September 21-22, 2018. The GLLC’s Executive Committee will decide in early 2018 whether to hold a special election to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term, which runs through the end of 2018.

The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments (CSG) supports and provides staffing services for the Caucus, which is funded in part by a grant from the Joyce Foundation. CSG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving all three branches of state government. For more information about the Caucus, please contact Lisa Janairo at [ljanairo@csg.org](mailto:ljanairo@csg.org) or 920.458.5910 or visit [www.greatlakeslegislators.org](http://www.greatlakeslegislators.org).