

# Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Gov. Granholm Approves Regional Travel and Tourism Act**

*Clears the Way for Creation of the Great Lakes Bay Regional CVB*

**SAGINAW, MI (December 17, 2010)** --- This week, Mich. Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed into law the Regional Convention and Tourism Act. The law enables Bay and Midland counties to increase their hotel occupancy assessment up to a maximum of 5 percent, the same level as Saginaw County, paving the way for the three Convention and Visitors Bureau offices to work under the umbrella of the Great Lakes Bay Regional CVB.

Tourism spending in the region tops \$252 million annually, providing 10 percent of the region's employment opportunities. A study conducted on behalf of Michigan's economic development groups showed that tourism has a positive impact on economic development. The likelihood of a person locating an organization in an area increases if they have first visited the area as a tourist.

"I applaud my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for working together to pass this important legislation for our community," said Rep. Jeff Mayes. "Spreading the word about all our region has to offer will attract even more visitors to our area, which will in turn support local workers, help our small businesses grow and strengthen our local economy."

"This is fantastic news for the Great Lakes Bay Region and the thousands of local families who work in our tourism and convention industry," said Rep. Ken Horn. "Working collectively, we can pool our resources and triple the amount of positive coverage for our region. As we've seen with the Pure Michigan campaign, tourism promotion works, and this will put us in the world's spotlight."

"We deeply appreciate the support of the community and business leaders, the Great Lakes Bay Regional Legislative Caucus, and the County Commissioners of Bay, Midland and Saginaw Counties," says Rummel. "I specifically want to thank Rep. Mayes and Sen. Tony Stamas for sponsoring the bill and Rep. Ken Horn for drafting the legislation. I'd also like to thank Senators Jim Barcia and Roger Kahn and Representatives Tim Moore, Bill Caul and Stacey Erwin-Oakes, who co-sponsored the bill."



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This change will allow the CVB to market the region more effectively, while maintaining the individuality of each community. In its first full year of operation, the CVB anticipates driving an additional \$500,000 into direct marketing efforts. Studies show that every dollar spent on tourism advertising generates another \$3.43 in spending.

“A unified convention and visitors bureau will help generate economic growth, enhance the quality of life, and result in a stronger tourism industry in the Great Lakes Bay Region,” says state Sen. Tony Stamas, R–Midland.

Although Midland County, Bay County, and Saginaw County CVBs have worked cooperatively for more than 20 years to promote regional tourism, the seed for consolidation was sown in July 2009. Since September 2009, the CVBs have been functioning with a united sales and management team. Each organization’s board has retained its respective oversight function and has been working aggressively toward establishing the new regional CVB. The next big effort on the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance agenda is the expansion and new terminal at MBS International Airport.

“There is a strong commitment on the part of area corporations and businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, convention & visitors bureaus and community leaders to maintain a vibrant MBS International Airport as our portal to the world for business and leisure travelers,” says Airport Manager, Jeff Nagel. “The terminal building, which is under construction, is a sign of our commitment to growth and improved quality of life. Visitors to our area will be welcomed into a modern, attractive facility, creating a positive first impression for customers, prospective investors, potential employees, and vacationers.”

A study done in 2005 by The Boyd Group/ASRC Inc. of Evergreen, Colorado, estimated the economic benefit of MBS International Airport to Midland, Bay and Saginaw counties at more than \$100 million annually, with the direct impact of jobs and property-related revenues of more than \$50 million annually. The vast majority of business people surveyed stated that they could not be located in the region or would not be as profitable in the absence of MBS International Airport. In addition, the report calculated the savings in time and cost to local users of MBS versus other airports at more than \$7 million annually.

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