

## Governor Quinn Signs Sister Lake Pact with Governor of Michoacán, Mexico

Written by Ryan C. Woods  
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### *Partnership to Improve Health of Lake Pátzcuaro and Lake Michigan, Boost Tourism and Protect Habitat*

MEXICO CITY – Governor Pat Quinn today joined Honorable Fausto Vallejo Figueroa - the Governor of Michoacán, Mexico - to sign a Sister Lake agreement between Lake Pátzcuaro and Lake Michigan. This unique connection is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to drive Illinois' economy forward and make Illinois one of the most eco-friendly states in the country. The pact pledges cooperation and sharing of best practices to enhance recreational use, boost tourism, improve commercial use and protect natural habitats.

"Today we are sealing the official friendship between our two states and our two lakes, and vowing to cooperate in solving the challenges faced by both waterways," Governor Quinn said. "The Illinois Sister Rivers/Sister Lakes project currently has partners - 'hermanas' - in Brazil, China, Ireland, Israel, Poland and South Korea. We are proud to have a new 'hermana' today in Mexico."

The Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony was witnessed by officials from Mexico and the United States, including Pátzcuaro Mayor Salma Karrum, Erongarícuaro Mayor Everardo Alberto Cortés and State Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez (D-Cicero).

In the Memorandum of Understanding, the governors agreed to cooperate in the following areas of mutual interest: exotic and invasive species, fishing population research, harmful algal blooms, water quality and pollution.

Lake Pátzcuaro is 200 miles west of Mexico City in the state of Michoacán. The Sister Lake agreement is part of the Sister Rivers/Sister Lakes Initiative created by Governor Quinn to enable public officials in diverse nations to share creative solutions to common waterway problems, such as run-off, flooding and invasive species. Governor Quinn has crafted Lake Michigan and Illinois River partnerships with Brazil's Capibaribe River, China's Huangpu River, Ireland's River Lee, Israel's Lake Kinneret, Poland's Vistula River and South Korea's Han River.

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Governor Quinn noted that for many Illinoisans of Mexican heritage, Michoacán was the home of their parents or grandparents and holds a special place in their hearts. One of the world's highest lakes, Lake Pátzcuaro is known as the "door to heaven." Michoacán is also the starting point for the migrating Monarch butterflies who travel from central Mexico all the way to Illinois, a symbol of the long-standing relationship between Illinois and Michoacán. The Monarch butterfly is the official state insect of Illinois.

Lake Michigan and Lake Pátzcuaro shaped fond memories for generations of families in Illinois and Michoacán. Today, the lakes face similar challenges. To combat the problem of silt build up, Governor Quinn shared details of an innovative project called "Mud-to-Parks," in which sediment was dredged from the bottom of the waterway, shipped to an abandoned steel mill site and spread out. Within months, grasses and animals began populating the area.

The Sister Lake signing occurred on the third day of Governor Quinn's trade mission to Mexico aimed at promoting tourism, water technology, agribusiness and manufacturing. Governor Quinn said the partnership will help boost tourism and export opportunities between Illinois and Michoacán. Earlier today, the governor laid wreaths at the monuments honoring Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr., in a Mexico City park. The governor also met with the Governor of the State of Mexico, Mayor of Mexico City and U.S. Ambassador to Mexico.

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