

## Report of the Honourable Rosa Galvez on International Travel to Detroit, Michigan, for the Great Lakes Economic Forum 2017

**Dates:** April 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Location:** Detroit, Michigan, United States

### Context

The Great Lakes Region is an important bi-national economic zone that encompasses 8 U.S. States and the provinces of Ontario and Québec. Should this region be a country, it would be the fourth largest economy in the world<sup>1</sup>. The region employs nearly a third of the combined American and Canadian workforce and oversees much of the commercial trade between our countries<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that economic cooperation in the region is imperative for the development of both countries.

In April 2015, the Council of the Great Lakes Region held its inaugural Great Lakes Economic Forum. The Council was created with the help of government, business leaders, non-profit organizations, labour groups and the academic sector to collaborate on economic opportunities and environmental protection. It aims to advise government policy on economic, environmental and social issues, encourage economic development in the region, and cultivate a strong regional voice to promote common interests.

The Great Lakes Economic Forum was created in 2015 as an annual gathering where relevant regional actors can build partnerships, share knowledge and shape smart policy for the region. It also aims to foster a more favourable business climate in the Great Lakes Region. This year, the Forum was held in Detroit, Michigan. It covered a wide range of issues, including shifting to a low-carbon economy, greening freight transportation, and protecting critical infrastructure<sup>3</sup>. The discussions and panels helped inform hundreds of legislators, business leaders, Mayors, Ambassadors and government officials on both sides of the border.

In 2018, the Great Lakes Economic Forum will be held in Montréal, Québec.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the Great Lakes Region, <https://councilgreatlakesregion.org/economic-forum/>

<sup>2</sup> Fisher et al., 2017. *Can we improve the coordination of trade agreements to better support the important supply chains that cross Canada-US border?*, Policy Options

<sup>3</sup> Great Lakes Economic Forum, <http://www.greatlakeseconomicforum.com/#>

## Activities Report

For the 2017 Great Lakes Economic Forum, I travelled to Detroit, Michigan, from April 24, 2017 to April 26, 2017. I was invited by Mark Fisher, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of the Great Lakes Region, to participate in a panel session entitled *In Conversation with Great Lakes Legislators*, which was held on April 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. During the Forum, I assisted to several interesting panels and met with a wide variety of officials. Namely, I met with former U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Bruce Heyman, and his wife Vicki Heyman, to discuss Canadian-American cooperation on infrastructure, the economy and environment protection.

The Forum was presented this year by Toyota Canada. As the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications (TRCM) is currently studying the regulatory and technical issues related to the deployment of connected and automated vehicles, I took this opportunity to discuss with Toyota Canada representatives about our current study and how automotive companies need to play an important role with the Canadian government to regulate their fast-changing industry. In the following months, TRCM invited a few North American automotive companies, such as General Motors, as witnesses in the study.

I also took the opportunity to connect with Mark Fisher as he is an important actor in the development of the region. On many occasions, he has advised Canadian parliamentarians, including the Prime Minister of Canada, on trade, security, natural resources development and environmental protection. I promoted the Senate of Canada as an integral part of policy planning and research on the matter, considering the variety and breadth of expertise represented in the Senate.

On the final day of the Forum, I participate in the panel session. Along with me, the panel included Wisconsin State Assembly Representative Cory Mason, and Member of Parliament for Windsor West, Brian Masse. The panel was moderated by Christopher Smillie, Principal at Tactix, an Ottawa-based public affairs firm. In my speech, I talked about my experience and expertise from the academic sector. I also talked about my appointment to the Senate and my objectives in Parliament as Senator for Québec. This included references to both committee studies on which I currently participate. TRCM's study on automated and connected vehicles is particularly relevant to the automotive sector in the Great Lakes Region. The study of the Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources on Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy is equally as important to the region as our countries share knowledge and technology to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Throughout the panel session, I discussed the crucial need for environmental protection of the Great Lakes. A fifth of the world's surface fresh water supply is contained in the region<sup>4</sup>. Important debate was held on the role of the government and businesses in the cleanup of waterways after oil spills and other disasters. I was asked to

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<sup>4</sup> Great Lakes Economic Forum, <http://greatlakeeconomicforum.com/>

speak to potential promotion of conservation and industry involvement. These are issues that impact our economies, our development and our health.

Finally, the Great Lakes Economic Forum is a great opportunity to advance Canadian interest with American legislators. I was able to promote the Senate's work and encourage cooperation on infrastructure, environmental protection and economic development. I look forward to more opportunities with the Council of the Great Lakes Region, namely the Great Lakes Economic Forum 2018 in Montréal, Québec.

*In Annexe, you will find a detailed description of costs.*

Produced by the office of Senator Rosa Galvez  
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### Annexe 1: Detailed Travel Costs

Flight	Montréal-Detroit, 24/04/17 Detroit-Québec, 26/04/17	\$510.80
Taxis	Airport to hotel	US\$67.18 (CA\$90.69)
Personal Car Mileage	34 km	\$18,87
Accommodation	2 nights	US\$381.48 (CA\$519.11)
Per diems	2 breakfasts 3 lunches 3 dinners 3 incidentals	\$278.20
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,417.67</b>