



NCEL

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

State Legislators From 5 States Come Together to Protect the Great Lakes

Lawmakers discussed top environmental threats such as invasive species and nutrient pollution

CHICAGO – State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) joined a bipartisan group of more than 20 state legislators from five states at the 2017 Great Lakes Forum organized by the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) in Chicago on November 3rd and 4th, 2017. The two-day Forum offered opportunities to collaborate on policy solutions for addressing nutrient pollution, removing toxins from drinking water and educating the next generation.

Attendees learned about a variety of water and conservation issues such as opportunities for wildlife corridors in the region and strategies to educate the next generation through outdoor recreation, green schoolyards, and improving green school infrastructure. Lawmakers also discussed innovative policy options for addressing nutrient pollution by better aligning state funding and research efforts.

The health of the Great Lakes took center stage as lawmakers learned about how an influx of plastic pollution threatens the ecosystem and human health. Small particles that shed off of clothing, called microfibers, are a specific emerging threat highlighted at the forum through a discussion on the latest research.

“NCEL exists to provide a dedicated space for legislators to come together and have productive conversations on these issues across state and party lines,” said NCEL Executive Director Jeff Mauk.

“States play a vital role in protecting the Great Lakes and their surrounding communities, and we believe that lawmakers are better positioned to act on environmental threats when they are able to collaborate and share ideas with their colleagues from across the region and country.”

NCEL is a nationwide network of state legislators from all 50 states and both major parties. Established in 1996, the Caucus serves as a resource for legislators from both parties on environmental issues. NCEL has convened legislators from the region since 2001, and its members have championed key policies protecting the ecosystem, including adoption the Great Lakes Compact and the enactment of state bans on microbeads.

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