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## The State of Michigan's Investment Mission to Sweden

(Alexandria, May 2010) The U.S. auto industry has suffered severe job losses during recent years. As Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm was looking for new ideas to increase economic growth, she was introduced to the Swedish Triple Helix Model by Lennart Johansson, the Swedish Consul General to Michigan. The Triple Helix Model is based on strong interactions between universities, industry, and government. The aim is to increase innovation in a knowledge-based economy.



Governor Granholm also realized that Michigan and Sweden share similar natural resources and a history as auto makers. She decided to adopt Swedish uses and applications, particularly Swedish forestry management practices, as a lead in re-directing Michigan's economy towards clean technology and renewable resources. Governor Granholm first visited Sweden in the summer of 2007 with the purpose of establishing relationships with Swedish alternative energy companies interested in expanding their business to the State of Michigan. Governor Granholm and her team, some of whom traveled to Sweden 10 days ahead of her to study the Swedish alternative energy sector, were extremely impressed of what they saw.

In August 2007, Governor Granholm met with leaders of Sweden's alternative energy industry, including government and company officials, in an effort to develop partnerships and encourage investment in Michigan. The meetings took place in Stockholm, Gothenburg and at E-Days in Växjö, in south of Sweden. The meeting in Gothenburg included a business roundtable discussion organized by Business Region Gothenburg. Former U.S. Ambassador to Sweden, Michael Woods, who participated in the roundtable discussion, helped open doors for the Michigan delegation and arranged for them to meet with 40 companies. Ambassador Wood also hosted a reception with more than 60 business executives and government officials and a private dinner with leading Swedish industrialists.



Governor Granholm gave a keynote address at the E-Days in Växjö in 2007, declaring that "We made many connections with companies that want a presence in the U.S., and our message was to let Michigan be their gateway. Our state's strategic plan is to replace lost manufacturing jobs with alternative energy jobs."

Since Governor Granholm's trips to Sweden in 2007, she has met with several Swedish dignitaries. In November 2007, she met with the Swedish Minister of Agriculture, Eskil Erlandsson, discussing a variety of issues important to their respective governments, including forestry and the expansion of the alternative energy industry to create jobs. In October 2008, Governor Granholm and His Majesty Carl



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XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, met in Detroit, Michigan at a conference on alternative energy which was very well covered in both Swedish and American media.

In May 2010, SACC-USA's membership online magazine *eCurrents* could report that Dayne Walling, the mayor of Flint, Michigan is visiting Sweden, hoping to bring back more jobs to his hometown, specifically green jobs. He will also attend the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Yes Summit in Leksand, Sweden. "We want cities all over USA to adopt the Swedish biogas model because their international business headquarters will be right here in Flint". The biogas model comes from a Swedish project that involves turning a community's human waste and waste water into bio-methane, which can then be burned to generate energy. Flint's version of the biogas concept should be up and running by late 2010 or early 2011.

"We want the job development. So far Swedish biogas have their North American headquarters here, we want them to not stop with Flint. We want them to adopt the same technology because that means job growth for us. So they have the facility at the waste water treatment plant. But just like every company has a business headquarters, you need managers, executives, accountants, and legal staff. We want those jobs here in Flint", said Dayne Walling ABC 12, source to *eCurrents*.