

**Remarks by Mayor Ellen Anderson of the Town of the Blue Mountains
and Director, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Panel on Great Lakes Decision Making and Ecosystem Management
A.D. Latornell Symposium
Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario
Wed, Nov 14th, 2007**

- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is a very complex ecosystem, and a very complex economic region. Many people, businesses, communities rely on the basin for their livelihood, their wellbeing, their prosperity.
- And yet, does the Great Lakes governance structure reflect this diversity of interests? I would have to say no.
- The governance structure is quite simply outdated, from a by-gone era when the federal and provincial governments took care of everything.
- Well, they've cut their budgets and their departments, they have downloaded much of the responsibility for water and aquatic ecosystems to municipalities and conservation authorities, but the governance structure remains the same- the province and federal government and their counterparts on the US side, sitting down privately and battling it out.
- This has to change, and I am going to outline what the GLSLCI is proposing to the federal government and the Ontario government. These changes are meant to reflect the changes over the last 15-20 years in responsibilities and investments from the federal and provincial to the municipal level.
- In particular, the Cities Initiative is calling on the Federal and Ontario Governments to involve local governments as full partners on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence matters, and secure municipalities a seat at the table for the renegotiation and implementation of COA 2010, and other decisions related to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.
- It is imperative that cities are included in government to government discussions, rather than as one of a number of stakeholders. We bring significant investment and decision making authority to the table. It is time that we work in a coordinated fashion with the Provincial and Federal Governments to protect the Great Lakes.
- When I say a seat at the table, I mean that Great Lakes municipalities need direct input at the earliest stages of negotiation of key agreements related to the lakes, and we need to be involved in the monitoring and reporting out on progress to the public.

- We want municipal contributions recognized and integrated into Great Lakes programmes and agreements. Municipalities invest enormous amounts of capital into water and wastewater infrastructure that have a direct impact on the lakes. We also make important decisions around land use planning, growth plans, the adoption of innovative green infrastructure, and water and energy conservation. All of these activities should be quantified and assessed as a contribution to Great Lakes programs and agreements.
- What would this kind of change look like in terms of governance? It is tricky for a municipal association like the Cities Initiative to be a signatory to a federal-provincial agreement, simply because an association of mayors cannot make commitments on behalf of its members.
- However, there may be a way to have a letter of agreement between the municipalities and the federal and provincial governments that sets out the relationship, and obligations of each party related to the Great Lakes.
- This letter of agreement could guide how municipalities and the Ontario and federal governments would work together in negotiating Great Lakes agreements and programmes and how they will monitor implementation and progress.
- This type of agreement would be not exclusive to municipalities, although there would be specific roles and responsibilities that would be unique to the municipal sector.
- The Cities Initiative would expect that a similar arrangement could be negotiated between the governments and First Nations, being respectful of the Federal Governments constitutional obligations towards First Nations.
- And an agreement could also be formalized between other stakeholders and the federal and provincial governments to involve them more directly, whether they be public interest groups or commercial or industrial interests, or recreational interests.
- In conclusion, the Cities Initiative believes strongly that changes to the governance structure for Great Lakes agreements, both within Canada, and bi-nationally, has to change to reflect the growing responsibilities, investments and decision making authority of the municipal sector.

Thank you.