



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent

Annual Report

2007-2008



2007-2008 Board of Directors



Mayor Richard M. Daley
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Founding U.S. Chair
and Director



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Racine, Wisconsin
Chair and Director



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Grand Rapids, Michigan
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St. Catharines, Ontario
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Director



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Director

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Great Lakes & St. Lawrence
Cities Initiative Members and
neighbors within the Basin:



In July, 2008, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) celebrates 5 years of making waves on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. What started in 2003 as a way to include cities as active participants in discussions about the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and to share best practices and experiences at the local level, has grown into a strong coalition of more than 50 mayors and local elected officials. GLSLCI is a key decision maker and partner in protecting, restoring and promoting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Most importantly, the cities and mayors of GLSLCI are leaders taking action to solve problems that threaten our waters.

It has been an honor serving as Chairman during GLSLCI's fifth year; one marked with much local action on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. GLSLCI and its mayors remain busy tackling matters related to water quality, water quantity and waterfront vitality on local, regional, national and international levels. The *Local Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence* report and other local accomplishments on beach health and water conservation are just a few examples of what cities are doing.

Cities along the lakes and river are intricately tied to the resource, as the livelihood of our communities depends on the health of this freshwater treasure. As large as the system is, however, it remains a vulnerable and fragile ecosystem. Local governments have the responsibility to highlight the critical importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to our communities, the two bordering countries and beyond. I look forward to working with fellow mayors and local officials to ensure our cities remain committed to providing long term sustainability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Becker". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and legible.

Mayor Gary Becker
City of Racine
Chairman, 2007-2008
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Water Quality

From drinking water supply to storm water management to recreational use, GLSLCI cities are literally on the frontlines of water quality issues. Because of this, member mayors have encouraged a strong focus on improving and protecting Great Lakes and St. Lawrence water quality.

Local Government Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River

GLSLCI cities place a high value on the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. In an effort to quantify the level of local commitment to the Lakes and River, GLSLCI partnered with the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) to study local governments' investment in protection and restoration activities. With funding from the Joyce Foundation, GLSLCI and GLC surveyed local governments, quantified their investments and developed recommendations for all orders of governments to further the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin ecosystem.

Surveys were sent to 688 local governments in the summer of 2007 and 143 responded, reporting that investments in 2006 reached almost \$3.3 billion. Extrapolating this data to local governments across the basin, the estimated annual investment is well over \$15 billion. More than \$12 billion goes to water quality management – including wastewater systems operation, maintenance and infrastructure – and \$3 billion to ecosystem protection.

The resulting *Local Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence* report emphasizes the need for other orders of government to increase their level of investment in programs and infrastructure to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Across the region, federal investment – especially for critical wastewater infrastructure – has declined significantly. Therefore, the report calls for specific action, including:

1. Increased commitment by all orders of government to eliminate the deficit and fully protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence;
2. Significantly increased investment from federal governments for wastewater treatment infrastructure;
3. Determination of fair and appropriate allocations for investment at each level of government.



Photo: Mayor Lapointe and Mayor Becker present the Local Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence report for Great Lakes Day, National Press Club, Washington D.C.

The *Local Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence* report was released in February 2008 as part of the Great Lakes Day celebration in Washington D.C. Mayor Gary Becker of Racine and Mayor Denis Lapointe of Salaberry de Valleyfield (directors on the GLSLCI Board) presented the report and its findings at the Great Lakes Commission meeting. The report received unprecedented national and regional coverage with more than 200 media hits, including articles in the *New York Times* and the *Canadian Press*. GLSLCI is confident the report's findings will continue to make the case that our cities must be at the table for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence policy and decision making, and that other parties need to step up their commitment to the resource.

The report is available at
www.glslicities.org/glinvestment.htm

Water Quality

Regional Response to BP



Photo: GLSLCI Executive Director David Ullrich at a press conference about the BP Whiting Refinery, Foster Avenue Beach, Chicago, IL

In July of 2007, GLSLCI mayors came together on a controversial issue affecting Great Lakes water quality. With US EPA approval, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management issued a water permit to British Petroleum (BP) to expand its Whiting, IN refinery. This action touched off a firestorm throughout the region, as the permit allowed BP to increase the amount of total suspended solids and ammonia the refinery could discharge into Lake Michigan. Of particular concern to GLSLCI mayors and the region was the exemption granted to BP from two longstanding Great Lakes water quality protection policies regarding mixing zones and anti-degradation. GLSLCI and its member mayors were vocal on the need to ensure that Great Lakes water quality remains protected and that the trend toward lowering pollution is continued.

A number of GLSLCI member cities passed resolutions calling for BP to implement the proper pollution controls at the refinery, including:

- Evanston;
- Highland Park;
- Ferndale;
- Salaberry-de-Valleyfield;
- Township of the Archipelago.

The City of Chicago launched a massive petition campaign and several Wisconsin mayors – including GLSLCI members Mayor Becker, Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee and Mayor Dave Ross of Superior – sent a letter of protest to Indiana decision makers. As a result of this advocacy and leadership from GLSLCI mayors and others, BP is working to ensure that future discharges will be at or below current levels.

Great Lakes Clean Beaches Initiative

Beaches are important for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities as they provide a recreational outlet and access to natural habitats for the urban community. Mayors take great pride in their beaches and waterfronts, and are therefore interested in avoiding contamination-related swimming advisories and closures. However, recent data indicates that 90% of beach advisories and closings in Great Lakes states resulted from unknown sources – a frustrating statistic. For this reason, GLSLCI spearheaded the Clean Beaches Initiative, a U.S. Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) effort to encourage the use of a standardized beach sanitary survey throughout the region.

U.S. EPA and other federal, state and local beach program partners developed and piloted a standard survey form in 2007 to help beach managers identify sources of contamination. Under the leadership of GLSLCI, the GLRC Clean Beaches Initiative conducted a targeted campaign to encourage coastal county health departments and communities to use the survey forms. A number of health departments and cities – including Chicago, the Town of Ajax, and Huron County, Ontario – indicated plans to use the survey starting with the 2008 beach season.



Photo: North Beach, Racine, WI

Water Quantity

Cities of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are fortunate to be located along one of the world's largest surface freshwater systems. As droughts and water shortages increase in frequency throughout the world, the importance of this freshwater will grow. Those in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region are in position to lead by example and become champions for and true practitioners of water conservation.

GLSLCI Water Conservation Framework

GLSLCI and its member cities signaled a commitment to water conservation with the 2007 launch of the GLSLCI Water Conservation Framework. As of June 2008, 33 participants committed to a 15% reduction in water use based on year 2000 levels by 2015. Of the 33 participants, 16 have water conservation plans in place and 17 are developing plans. GLSLCI created a webpage dedicated to this effort including city profile pages highlighting best practices and conservation efforts. The success of this program is defined by the broad participation of cities, as well as the collection of cities developing and implementing conservation plans. GLSLCI continues to support cities as they complete the planning process and implement water conservation practices.

The city profile pages can be viewed at **www.glslicities.org/watercons.htm**

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Agreement and Compact

Closely tied to the water conservation issue is the enactment of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The Agreement and Compact were developed in 2005 by the governors of the eight Great Lakes states and the premiers of the two Canadian Provinces to ensure the resource is managed wisely. As of June 2008, the Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Wisconsin and Ohio state legislatures have ratified the Compact and their governors have signed the legislation into law. Final action is expected in Michigan and Pennsylvania and then the Compact will be sent for U.S. Congressional approval. Ontario passed legislation to accept the Agreement in 2006 and Quebec has recently introduced legislation to accept the Agreement; they have both already started developing water conservation objectives as outlined within the Agreement and Compact.

In 2007 and 2008, mayors actively encouraged their respective state legislatures to ratify the Compact in the form endorsed by the governors and premiers. Mayor George Heartwell, a director on the GLSLCI board, testified before the Michigan State Legislature in March 2008 and Toledo Mayor Carleton S. Finkbeiner, also a GLSLCI director, testified in April 2008 before the Ohio State Senate. In addition, Mayor Ross, Mayor Becker, Mayor Barrett, Mayor John Piskura of Sheffield Lake and others have spoken out and written letters in support of the Compact.



Photo: Sailing on Lake Superior, Thunder Bay, ON

Waterfront Vitality

Water Levels in the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence

Declining water levels in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence demonstrate the need for a regional commitment to sustainable water management and water conservation, particularly in the Upper Lakes region. GLSLCI member mayors understand the issue of low lake levels for their communities, as they affect drinking water and sewage infrastructure, property, shipping and the overall health of the ecosystem.



Photo: Mayor Anderson and former Mayor Bergson at the 2007 GLSLCI Midwinter Board of Directors Meeting, Racine, WI

The GLSLCI Board of Directors adopted a water levels resolution at the 2007 Midwinter Board of Directors Meeting and sent a letter to the International Joint Commission (IJC) on the issue. The resolution and letter call for the IJC to conduct its Upper Great Lakes / St. Clair River Study, which investigates water level controls in the Upper Lakes and lakebed erosion in the St. Clair River, in an expeditious manner. Scientifically sound information is needed so that U.S. and Canadian governments can move forward with action. Additionally, the resolution and letter call for GLSLCI to organize meetings between mayors and other interested parties around Lake Huron, Lake Michigan and Lake Superior to ensure the local perspective is vetted and heard.

GLSLCI nominated Jeff Vito, Director of Development and Government Affairs of the City of Superior, to serve on the IJC's Upper Lakes Study Public Interest Advisory Group. Additionally, in February 2008 Mayor Ellen Anderson of the Town of the Blue Mountains, a director on the GLSLCI board, and Nicola Crawhall, Deputy Director of GLSLCI, held a meeting about Upper Lakes' water levels with Helena Guergis, Canada's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and officials from Environment Canada.

More information is available at
www.glslicities.org/statements.htm

Waterfront vitality – including the accessibility of the water and shoreline to citizens, the revitalization of blighted waterfronts and the restoration of natural habitats for plants, animals and fish – is very important to GLSLCI communities. Cities are often catalysts for projects that revitalize or restore waterfronts and habitats, as exemplified by projects like Racine's North Beach, Chicago's Hegewisch Marsh, Toronto's Lower Don River restoration and Superior's Hog Island Inlet restoration.

Great Lakes Habitat Initiative

Over the last year, GLSLCI has been active on the Great Lakes Habitat Initiative (GLHI), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) effort that progresses habitat restoration and protection goals identified in the U.S. Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC). The GLHI identifies site-specific projects that can be implemented under existing funding to protect and restore wetlands and aquatic habitat through the use of project and funding program databases. The goal of GLHI is to bring together projects, partners and funding programs to protect and restore wetlands and aquatic habitat.



Photo: Habitat restoration work at Hog Island Inlet, Superior, WI

GLSLCI Executive Director David Ullrich and Program Manager Melissa Soline participated as municipal representatives for the GLHI Steering Committee and the Project Development Team. In addition to shaping the direction of the initiative and the development of the databases, GLSLCI will keep its membership informed of GLHI products so that more acres of wetland and aquatic habitat are protected and restored.

Members & Board of Directors Meetings

2007 Annual Member Meeting & Conference

The GLSLCI Annual Member Meeting & Conference was hosted by Mayor Heartwell and the City of Grand Rapids, a leading community in sustainable practices. The conference took place at the DeVos Center, a new state-of-the-art conference facility located on the banks of the beautiful Grand River.

The meeting attracted over 200 delegates, including mayors and other elected officials from 24 cities and towns as well as representatives from the Canadian Consulate, state, federal, provincial and tribal governments. GLSLCI members endorsed 15 resolutions in total, covering topics such as the need for dedicated water and wastewater infrastructure funding for cities, clean beaches, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Agreement and Compact, sustainable cities and mercury contamination. Mayor Becker became the new chair of the organization as Mayor Lynn Peterson of Thunder Bay assumed the role of vice chair. The organization honored Mayor David Miller of Toronto for his dedication to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River by naming him Founding Canadian Chair of GLSLCI.

The launch of the GLSLCI Water Conservation Framework was announced at the annual meeting. At the time, 11 of the participants had already conserved 56 billion gallons of water (enough to fill 85,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools!) since the year 2000.

The 2007 annual meeting also included the first ever Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award, established by the Wege Foundation and the City of Grand Rapids. The award provides seed money to cities with populations less than 100,000 to do sustainable, meaningful projects that balance economic, social and environmental aspects within the community. Beaconsfield, Québec received the 2007 award for the city's Pump Patrol, an effort to halt illegal connections to the city's sanitary sewer system. This effort reduced the likelihood of sewage overflows into the river due to system overload. The Wege Foundation has generously agreed to continue to fund the award for the next few years.

2007 Midwinter Board of Directors Meeting

In December 2007, GLSLCI held its annual Midwinter Board of Directors meeting in Racine, WI at the SC Johnson Wingspread Conference Center. The meeting was attended by U.S. Founding Chair Mayor Richard M. Daley, Canadian Founding Chair Mayor Miller, 2007-2008 GLSLCI Chair Mayor Becker and other leading GLSLCI mayors. The board took action on items including a challenge to governments to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

Under the GLSLCI Challenge to Governments, the board called on U.S. presidential candidates, the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, the Canadian government, the Ontario and Québec governments, and local governments to take decisive action on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. The challenge included actions like ratifying the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, implementing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy and renegotiating the outdated Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Careful not to overlook the responsibility of local governments to the resource, the Board challenged local governments to accelerate efforts to reduce sewage overflows, expand water conservation efforts, and solve beach contamination problems.

The GLSLCI challenge to governments was met with support and enthusiasm throughout the region and GLSLCI continues to follow up with all orders of government on the challenges put forth. In fact, in the spirit of the challenge, GLSLCI, through Deputy Director Nicola Crawhall, approached the Ontario and Canadian governments in early 2008 and has been in active discussions around an enhanced role for GLSLCI in the implementation of the Canada-Ontario Agreement and the renegotiation of the Agreement post 2010.

More information is available at
www.glslicities.org/news.htm

Membership & Outreach

As GLSLCI celebrates 5 years of service, the organization continues to expand its operations and broaden its representation throughout the region. The organization has taken key steps in 2007 and early 2008 to strategically position itself for the next five years.

Membership

GLSLCI's membership has grown to include 55 members from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. Since the 2007 Annual Meeting, the following communities have joined the organization:

- City of Sheffield Lake
- Township of Nipigon
- City of Bayfield
- Town of Midland
- Township of Georgian Bay
- Township of Terrace Bay
- County of Bruce



Photo: Mayor Daley, Mayor Miller, Mayor Lapointe and Mayor Becker at the 2007 GLSLCI Midwinter Board of Directors Meeting, Racine WI

GLSLCI continues to work to recruit new member cities and encourage current members to reach out to neighboring communities. While the organization is strengthening its focus on expanding its US membership, more member cities gained on both sides of the border will only enhance municipal representation for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Outreach

GLSLCI member mayors and staff participated in a number of regional events this year to encourage broader membership and to help demonstrate what the

organization and cities are doing to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River:

- ***Making a Great Lake Superior*** - A regional GLSLCI meeting was held in conjunction with this October 2007 conference in Duluth; GLSLCI staff updated member mayors, including Mayor Peterson, Mayor Larry MacDonald of Bayfield, Mayor Richard Harvey of Nipigon, former Mayor Herb Bergson of Duluth and other interested municipalities about GLSLCI activities;
- ***2007 LaTornell Conservation Symposium*** - GLSLCI Executive Director, David Ullrich, was a keynote speaker; Mayor Anderson participated on a panel regarding Great Lakes decision-making and ecosystem management;
- ***Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference*** - Mayor Anderson spoke and GLSLCI had an information room where interested municipalities could learn more about the organization;
- ***GLSLCI Ontario regional meeting*** - hosted by Mayor Fred Eisenberger of Hamilton in May 2008; covered topics including water levels and wind energy on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

GLSLCI is also regularly involved in meetings of the:

- Great Lakes Regional Collaboration;
- Binational Executive Committee;
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission;
- Great Lakes Commission;
- Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Review Committee;
- IJC Water Quality Board;
- Great Lakes Wind Collaborative.

In order to help bolster membership and ensure the GLSLCI message is clear and effective, GLSLCI hired a communications firm in 2008. With support from a 2007 Joyce Foundation grant, GLSLCI selected Carolyn Grisko & Associates Inc. – a Chicago-based strategic communications firm with extensive nonprofit and local government experience. There are a number of projects already in the pipeline and GLSLCI is confident that the expertise of a communications firm will help the organization send more effective messages, bring more recognition to member cities, strengthen the membership and improve media relations.

Operations & Conclusion

Operations

GLSLCI has been fortunate to continue its internship program over the past year. The organization benefited greatly from the work of Rebecca Lefton, who started her internship in the spring of 2007 and continued to work with the organization throughout her last year of graduate school at the University of Chicago. Edith Moreno, from the University of California–Santa Barbara, will be working as a GLSLCI intern over the summer of 2008.

GLSLCI was also excited to partner with NASA in 2008 on its DEVELOP internship program. The DEVELOP program pairs interns and NASA satellite imagery with local communities that are trying to solve problems. GLSLCI hosted two NASA interns in the spring of 2008, University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) graduate students Alison Welch and Kingsley Anurugwo, who worked on a water levels project for the organization. NASA interns Mehul Nahar from the University of Mississippi and Deivya Bansal from UIC will be working with the organization over the summer of 2008.

GLSLCI is also taking steps with the board to develop a Great Lakes / St. Lawrence Mayoral Scholars program through which member mayor offices are encouraged to host interns dedicated to Great Lakes and St. Lawrence issues. Additionally, as the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is home to many prestigious academic institutions, GLSLCI's board and members directed the organization to strengthen partnerships with them to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.



Photo: GLSLCI member mayors at the 2007 Annual Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI

Conclusion

In five short years, GLSLCI has established itself as a major, positive presence on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and members are involved on a daily basis in improving the land- and waterscape. With a sense of urgency to solve problems and a preference for action and results, cities are helping to improve this globally significant freshwater resource.



Photo: Châteauguay, QU

Sustaining the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence long into the future will help ensure the quality of life and economic well being for many generations to come.

For more information about all of our programs visit www.glslcities.org

2007-2008 Membership List



Ajax (Town of), Ontario
Mayor Steve Parish

Archipelago (Township of the),
Ontario
Reeve Peter Ketchum

Bayfield, Wisconsin
Mayor Larry MacDonald

Beaconsfield, Québec
Mayor Bob Benedetti

Bécancour, Québec
Mayor Maurice Richard

Blue Mountains (Town of the),
Ontario
Mayor Ellen Anderson

Bruce County, Ontario
Warden Milt McIver

Carling Township, Ontario
Mayor Mike Konoval

Châteauguay, Québec
Mayor Sergio Pavone

Chicago, Illinois
Mayor Richard M. Daley

Cobourg, Ontario
Mayor Peter Delanty

Collingwood, Ontario
Mayor Chris Carrier

Cornwall, Ontario
Mayor Bob Kilger

Duluth, Minnesota
Mayor Don Ness

Durham Region, Ontario
Regional Chair Roger Anderson

East Chicago, Indiana
Mayor George Pabey

Erie, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joseph Sinnott

Evanston, Illinois
Mayor Lorraine H. Morton

Ferndale, Michigan
Mayor Craig Covey

Ferrysburg, Michigan
Mayor Jeffrey Stille

Gary, Indiana
Mayor Rudolph Clay

Georgian Bay (Township of), Ontario
Mayor James R. Walden

Goderich, Ontario
Mayor Deb Shewfelt

Grand Marais, Minnesota
Mayor Evelyn Larsen

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mayor George K. Heartwell

Hamilton, Ontario
Mayor Fred Eisenberger

Highland Park, Illinois
Mayor Michael D. Belsky

Kingston, Ontario
Mayor Harvey Rosen

Midland (Town of), Ontario
Mayor James M. Downer

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Mayor Tom Barrett

Montréal, Québec
Mayor Gérald Tremblay

Niagara Falls, Ontario
Mayor Ted Salci

Niagara Region, Ontario
Regional Chair Peter Partington

Nipigon (Township of), Ontario
Mayor Richard Harvey

Parry Sound, Ontario
Mayor Richard Adams

Penetanguishene, Ontario
Mayor Anita Dubeau

Port Colborne, Ontario
Mayor Vance Badawey

Québec Metropolitan
Community, Québec
Mayor Régis Labeaume

Racine, Wisconsin
Mayor Gary Becker

Rochester, New York
Mayor Robert J. Duffy

St. Catharines, Ontario
Mayor Brian McMullan

Salaberry de Valleyfield, Québec
Mayor Denis Lapointe

Sault St. Marie, Ontario
Mayor John Rowsell

Sheffield Lake, Ohio
Mayor John Piskura

Sorel-Tracy, Québec
Mayor Marcel Robert

Superior, Wisconsin
Mayor Dave Ross

Terrace Bay (Township of), Ontario
Mayor Michael G. King

Thunder Bay, Ontario
Mayor Lynn Peterson

Toledo, Ohio
Mayor Carleton S. Finkbeiner

Toronto, Ontario
Mayor David Miller

Trois-Rivières, Québec
Mayor Yves Lévesque

Wasaga Beach, Ontario
Mayor Cal Patterson

Waukegan, Illinois
Mayor Richard H. Hyde

Whiting, Indiana
Mayor Joseph M. Stahura

Windsor, Ontario
Mayor Eddie Francis



For more information:

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www.glslcities.org

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) is a binational coalition of mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal and first nation governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. Founded by Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago in 2003 and quickly joined by Mayor David Miller of Toronto, GLSLCI has more than 50 member cities from around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. GLSLCI is an independent 501(c)(3) headquartered in Chicago.

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