



# GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011



**Cities** continue leading the way to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, cities tackled a number of serious issues this past year, including Asian carp, the shipment of radioactive waste, stormwater management and the very real threat of oil and hazardous material spills on and around this precious resource. The Cities Initiative also launched the Green CiTTS program, with the goal of helping cities become more sustainable.



We are taking our place, and more than ever, our organization is highly respected and considered a major bi-national stakeholder in the promotion and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. I am very proud to have chaired the Cities Initiative this past year, particularly as the organization expanded its staff and operations to better serve our Québec members along the St. Lawrence River. I continue to be impressed and humbled as the communities of this organization, representing more than fourteen million people, work together to ensure the health and vitality the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system.

Mayor Denis Lapointe, Salaberry-de-Valleyfield  
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2010-2011

## VOICE OF MAYORS

### ***Shale Gas Exploration Around the Basin***

The shale gas industry has grown within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin over the last few years, particularly in the Province of Québec. The Cities Initiative has been monitoring the issue closely as shale gas extraction has both environmental and jurisdictional implications within the region. During the recent environmental review of the industry in Québec, the Cities Initiative submitted official comments that called for the effective and responsible management of the shale gas industry to ensure the protection of the environment and residents as well as the respect of the role and authority of municipalities. Over the next year, the Cities Initiative will monitor Québec's shale gas strategic environmental evaluation, explore the creation of a compensation fund for municipalities in Québec, and encourage the development of a permanent advisory group involving municipal partners. The Cities Initiative will also monitor the shale gas industry in other areas of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin and its impact on the Lakes, River and municipalities. [www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/shalegas.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/shalegas.cfm)

### ***Opposing Shipment of Radioactive Waste***

In 2010, the Cities Initiative raised concerns about a proposed shipment of sixteen decommissioned nuclear steam generators containing radioactive waste through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to Sweden for processing. Of particular concern to the organization was the lack of consultation with local government and the public, the potential precedent-setting nature of the shipment, and the fact that it exceeds the international allowable safety limit for radioactivity on a single ship. The Cities Initiative presented concerns to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources. The CNSC decided to allow the shipment, but Bruce Power has since delayed the shipment. Attention has now been turned to the additional approvals needed from the United States and European countries. [www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/Nuclear.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/Nuclear.cfm)

### ***Concern Over Spills in the Basin***

Prompted by the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Cities Initiative mayors expressed concern over the possibility of such an occurrence in the Great Lakes or St. Lawrence. Mayors wrote to both the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security requesting a meeting to discuss response measures in place for such a disaster. In response, Cities Initiative staff met with Federal agencies to gain a better understanding of how the prevention, preparedness, response, and restoration process works. The topic will be further discussed at the 2011 Annual Meeting. [www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/spills.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/voice-of-mayors/spills.cfm)



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# INITIATIVES



The Cities Initiative launched the *Green CITTS* (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Milwaukee. Through the program, the Cities Initiative is establishing a comprehensive approach through training and funding opportunities, best practice networks, and the expertise of a municipal advisory committee to build sustainable cities and protect resources in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. The initial focus is on improving stormwater management and over twenty municipalities have signed on to participate in the program. In *Green CITTS'* first year, the Cities Initiative was instrumental in securing approximately \$200,000 for demonstration projects on stormwater related issues in various member cities. Additionally, the Cities Initiative conducted training webinars for members on stormwater management topics, and surveyed members and prepared a comprehensive report on municipal stormwater management. The report makes recommendations for improvements within the region and filling critical gaps on the planning and implementation of stormwater management projects.

[www.glslcities.org/initiatives/greencities.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/greencities.cfm)

## ***Preventing Asian Carp:***

### ***Chicago Area Waterway Study 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

As the threat of invasive species looms broadly over the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, the migration of Asian carp from the Mississippi River through the Chicago Area Waterway system and toward Lake Michigan poses the most immediate threat. To help address this threat, the Cities Initiative is collaborating with the Great Lakes Commission to direct an expedited study to restore the separation of the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins. The Cities Initiative, along with its partners, was successful in raising over \$2 million from a group of funders to develop options to close the pathway for invasive species while improving ecological conditions, transportation, and flood control in the region. The study will be completed by January 2012. [www.glslcities.org/initiatives/21century\\_asiancarp.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/21century_asiancarp.cfm)

## ***Water Conservation Framework***

The Cities Initiative *Water Conservation Framework* is a voluntary program through which local governments commit to working towards a 15 percent reduction in total water usage below year 2000 levels by the year 2015. At the 2010 Annual Meeting it was announced that almost half of the thirty-three participating cities had collectively achieved a 13 percent reduction in water use, below year 2000 levels, conserving a total of 87 billion gallons of water. Additionally, the City of Thunder Bay and the Town of Cobourg were recognized for innovation and progress in water conservation. Throughout the year, the Cities Initiative partnered with the Alliance for Water Efficiency and the POLIS Project to bring water conservation focused training opportunities to members. [www.glslcities.org/initiatives/water-conservation.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/water-conservation.cfm)

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# REPRESENTING CITIES

## ***The Cities Initiative at Great Lakes Days***

Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids and Cities Initiative Executive Director David Ullrich attended Great Lakes Days in Washington, D.C. in early 2011 to brief congressmen and staff on the concerns of cities around the Great Lakes. Mayor Heartwell and Dave focused on the issue of invasive species, the potential Bruce Power nuclear waste shipment, and the importance of continued funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in a number of meetings with representatives from Senator Levin and Stabenow's staff, Representative Quigley, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Transportation.

## ***Continued Collaboration with Ontario Government***

The Cities Initiative continues to work closely with the Ontario government under the Canada-Ontario Agreement Memorandum of Cooperation. Over the past year, the Cities Initiative worked on three ongoing projects with the Ontario provincial government: monitoring on combined sewer overflows and wastewater plant optimization, economic study on the value of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and stormwater studies. [www.glslcities.org/representing-cities/coa-moc.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/representing-cities/coa-moc.cfm)

## ***Cities Initiative Hosts St. Lawrence Reflection Day***

In Montréal, the Cities Initiative and Stratégies Saint-Laurent held the first St. Lawrence Reflection day on April 15, 2011. This day represented the first official meeting in Québec involving federal, provincial, municipal and local partners focused solely on the St. Lawrence River. In addition to discussing the current state of the River, this day represented an excellent opportunity to increase collaboration among all interested partners in its protection, restoration and development. The Cities Initiative looks forward to further cultivating the working partnership between the federal government, the Province of Québec, municipalities and local partners along the St. Lawrence River.

# MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

## ***2010 Annual Meeting***

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2010 Annual Member Meeting and Conference, “Greening Our Blue Border”, hosted by Mayor Tom Barrett, brought mayors, stakeholders, local business and water experts to Milwaukee, Wisconsin on June 16-18th, 2010. The Cities Initiative membership approved seventeen resolutions during the member meeting, including support for regionally integrated watershed plans, a need for a “vision” for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region and a push to keep invasive species out of our waterways. Additionally, the membership voted to launch the *Green CITTs* (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program. The 2010 ***Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award*** recipient was the City of Bayfield, Wisconsin for their Clean It Green It campaign to encourage a green commitment among residents.

[www.glslcities.org/annual-meetings/2010.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/annual-meetings/2010.cfm).

## ***Lake Michigan Mayors’ Summit***

The Cities Initiative and Founding US Chair Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago hosted a Lake Michigan Mayors’ Summit in March 2011 at the John G. Shedd Aquarium. This regional meeting brought together twelve mayors and representatives from around Lake Michigan including Mayor Daley. Topics discussed during the meeting included Asian Carp and the ongoing Chicago Area Waterway Study, approaches to stormwater management in the City of Milwaukee, and the benefits of beach restoration at Racine’s North Beach. The mayors also heard from David Naftzger, Executive Director of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, Cameron Davis, Great Lakes Advisor to the US EPA Administrator, and Ellen Alberding, President of the Joyce



## ***Midyear Board Meeting***

Mayor Régis Labeaume hosted the Cities Initiative mid-year Board of Directors Meeting in beautiful Québec City on December 10, 2010. In addition to Mayor Labeaume, Mayor Ellen Anderson of the Town of the Blue Mountains, Mayor Daley of Chicago, Mayor Alan DeSousa of the St. Lawrence borough of Montreal, Mayor John Dickert of Racine, Mayor Heartwell of Grand Rapids, and Mayor Brian McMullan of St. Catharines, were in attendance as well as representatives for former Mayor Robert Duffy of Rochester, Mayor Eddie Francis of Windsor, and former Mayor Dave Ross of Superior. The Board addressed a number of key issues during the meeting, including a call for a summit with the Province of Québec and the St. Lawrence community; concern over environmental threats from the shale gas extraction process and costs imposed on cities, especially in Québec; endorsement of Green Marine, a program to encourage more environmental friendly maritime operations; and approval of a resolution which encourages renewable energy development in the region (the resolution was then brought to the membership and carried). Additionally, the Board recognized Mayor Daley for his vision and leadership in forming the Cities Initiative in 2003 and as a champion of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection and restoration. Finally, the Board selected the Metropolitan Community of Québec as the host for the 2012 Annual Member Meeting and Conference.

## ***Membership Growth***

Since the 2010 Annual Meeting, the Cities Initiative has welcomed eleven new members, bringing total membership to eighty-one cities, representing more than fourteen million people around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin!

[www.glslcities.org/member-cities.cfm](http://www.glslcities.org/member-cities.cfm)

## **The new members include:**

***Essex County, ON  
Leamington, ON  
Longueuil, QC  
Mackinaw City, MI  
Michigan City, IN  
Mississauga, ON***

***Niagara Falls, NY  
Port Hope, ON  
Sheboygan, WI  
South Haven, MI  
Varenes, QC***

***The Cities Initiative thanks all of its members and funders for their support, and especially the Joyce Foundation which has been essential to our success from the beginning.***