



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Thunder Bay, ON



Dear Mayors and Friends of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative,

I have truly enjoyed serving as Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in this, its 11th year, the beginning of a new decade for our very important work together. I am convinced our efforts as mayors and locally elected officials to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are as important as ever. I am pleased we undertook work to create a 10-year vision for the organization, the lakes, river, and region this past year. This vision will help guide the organization and us, as mayors, as we continue to lead by example to protect and sustainably manage our freshwater resources, and support and grow our communities.

We had quite a busy year, continuing to work on ongoing challenges facing the lakes and river and addressing new threats. We continued our efforts to encourage a long-term solution to the problem of Asian carp, we addressed the issue of microplastics, an emerging threat to our waterways and wildlife, and began exploring the issue of energy transportation throughout the region, among many other important issues. Also of note, we organized and held the first Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Day in Ottawa, a chance for our mayors and other officials to meet with federal and provincial representatives to discuss issues of significance to the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence, and our communities. Thank you for all your hard work over the last year and I look forward to working with you all to realize our shared vision of a strong, healthy, and vibrant Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,

Keith Hobbs
Mayor, Thunder Bay
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2013-2014



Energy Transport

As an intervener in the Enbridge Pipeline Reversal Project, the Cities Initiative aimed to achieve a balance between sustainable development and the well-being of communities and their citizens. Culminating with an oral presentation in Toronto before the National Energy Board in October 2013, the Cities Initiative highlighted the need not only to guarantee the protection of the environment, lakes and waterways, but also to provide to concerned citizens and parties an acceptable level of trust and oversight. In February 2014, before a Commission of the Québec National Assembly, the Cities Initiative gave its support, with recommendations, to Bill 37 which establishes a moratorium on the research and exploitation of shale gas in the St. Lawrence valley. Finally, with the assistance of its sub-committee on Fossil Energy Transportation which convened thrice since November 2013, the Cities Initiative progressed in developing a comprehensive Energy Framework and a related resolution submitted to members at the 2014 annual meeting.



Wasaga Beach, ON

Credit: edto.net

Deep Geologic Repository

The accumulation of radioactive waste from nuclear power plants around the Great Lakes has concerned the Cities Initiative for many years. Recently, Ontario Power Generation, owner of three plants, proposed a deep geologic repository (DGR) for long term management of low and mid-level waste at its Bruce Nuclear Plant in Kincardine. Many mayors from the area have been involved in the proposed project for a number of years, and the Cities Initiative had an extended discussion

about the proposal at the 2013 annual meeting. Ultimately, the Board decided to appear at the public hearing on the DGR and raise concerns about the proposed DGR being less than one kilometer from Lake Huron, the lack of consideration of other locations, and the potential precedent for more low, mid, and high level radioactive waste disposal sites near the Great Lakes. The matter is under review by the Canadian government and will likely not be decided until the end of 2014 or into 2015.

Asian Carp

Efforts to find a long term solution for keeping Asian carp from reaching Lake Michigan through the Chicago Waterway System intensified with the January 6, 2014, release of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps study outlines eight alternatives ranging from the current baseline work up to full, physical separation of Lake Michigan from the Mississippi River basin. The Corps did not, however, recommend an alternative, and has no process or timeline for reaching a decision. At the midyear Board meeting, the Board passed a resolution endorsing work by the Cities Initiative and the Great Lakes Commission to implement a process and forum to reach a regional consensus on the best alternative to stop the passage of aquatic invasive species between the two watersheds. The Cities Initiative and the Commission secured \$200,000 to retain a facilitator/mediator to manage the regional consensus discussion. The Cities Initiative also strongly encourages that interim short and mid-term actions to reduce the risk of Asian carp be considered and taken. To learn more, please visit

<http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/21century asiancarp.cfm>.



Credit: Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Water Levels

Last August, the Cities Initiative endorsed the International Joint Commission's (IJC) Plan 2014, the latest regulation plan for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River system, while underlining a number of critical issues and unanswered concerns. The Cities Initiative also requested, on both sides of the border, an immediate review of options for the restoration of water levels in Lakes Michigan and Huron, and that a letter of reference be issued to the IJC to pursue adaptive management activities and additional funding and capabilities be allocated to relevant ministries to conduct pilot projects in affected communities.



Thunder Bay, ON

REPRESENTING CITIES

Ottawa Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Day

On April 2nd and 3rd, 2014, Cities Initiative member mayors and staff held the inaugural Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Day in Ottawa, Ontario. Cities Initiative mayors and elected officials in attendance were: Ellen Anderson, Sandra Cooper, Keith Hobbs, Denis Lapointe, Brian McMullan, Michelle Morin-Doyle, John Paterson, Cal Patterson, Chantal Rouleau, and Jim Tovey. The mayors met with US Ambassador Bruce Heyman, the Hon. Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Opposition, Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea's staff, as well as a number of members of parliament from the three major parties to bring attention to urgent issues facing shoreline communities and the waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. The mayors and officials highlighted five challenges facing the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence including:

- 1) Increasing variability of water levels;
- 2) Impacts of climate change on shoreline communities and the need for adaptation support;
- 3) Action on phosphorus run-off into the Great Lakes and the growth of algae blooms;
- 4) Transportation of fossil fuels across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin; and
- 5) Public shoreline access and shoreline infrastructure funding needs.

The Ottawa Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Day was very well received and the Cities Initiative looks forward to continuing this important event for our members in the future.



Mayors meet Ambassador Heyman.

Credit: Katie Szymanski

Washington Great Lakes Days

Mayor John Dickert of Racine and Dave Ullrich and Simon Belisle of the Cities Initiative attended a number of events and visited several Congressional Representatives and Senators, as well as senior U.S. and Canadian Government Officials during Great Lakes Days the first week of March 2014 in Washington. Included in the visits were Deputy Head of Mission Denis Stevens of the Canadian Embassy, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and U.S. Representatives Ron Kind of Wisconsin, Dan Kildee of Michigan, Robin Kelly and Peter Roskam of Illinois, Administrator Gina McCarthy and Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe of the Environmental Protection Agency, Deputy Undersecretary Ann Mills and Director Anne Alonzo of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The primary issues emphasized by the Cities Initiative were the importance of Great Lakes

REPRESENTING CITIES

Restoration Initiative funding, the economic importance of beaches, and concern over nutrient pollution, radioactive waste disposal and transport of oil-related materials. All the meetings were very productive and reinforced the important role mayors are playing on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence issues.

Implementation of the new Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

The new Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between Canada and the United States became effective in 2013 and provides for a significantly different Water Quality Board (WQB) as the principal advisor to the International Joint Commission (IJC). Most importantly, it includes several seats at the table for local, regional, and tribal governments, industry, agriculture, environmental, and other interests, rather than just federal, provincial, and state representatives, as before. In addition, the IJC named Cities Initiative Executive Director Dave Ullrich the U.S. Chair of the Board, putting the Cities in the best possible position to provide direction on key issues such as nutrient reductions, climate change, invasive species, indicators of progress, and many others. The Cities Initiative was also invited to join several annex committees which do the important work of establishing plans to implement commitments under the new Water Quality Agreement. The Cities Initiative is representing the municipal voice on the following binational annex committees: Annex 2, Lakewide Management, with a focus on Lakewide Management Plans and developing an integrated nearshore framework; Annex 4, Nutrients, tasked with developing binational targets for phosphorus for Lake Erie by 2016; Annex 5, Discharges from Vessels; and Annex 6, Invasive Species, specifically on education and outreach to identify and stop invasive species before they get established.

Great Lakes Memorandum of Cooperation

Under the memorandum of cooperation with the Ontario Government, the Cities Initiative was able to provide early advice to the Ontario Government on key Great Lakes initiatives as they were being

developed, including the renegotiation of the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act, and the Great Lakes Strategy. To learn more, please visit <http://www.glslcities.org/representing-cities/coa-moc.cfm#return-coa-moc>.



Goderich, ON

Great Lakes Advisory Board

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is providing \$300 million per year for projects and other actions in the basin, and the U.S. government has formed a Great Lakes Advisory Board to provide advice and direction for how this money should be invested. The Cities Initiative is in a strong position on this Board as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has named Dave Ullrich as Chair. In December 2013, the Board completed a report with recommendations on many key issues related to nutrient removal, toxic cleanups, invasive species, and several others. This will influence the GLRI Action Plan scheduled to come out in the summer of 2014, and serve as a guide to GLRI investments for the next five years.

Great Lakes Fishery Commission

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission carries out responsibilities assigned to it by the United States and Canada under a 1954 treaty, with a focus on sea lamprey control, fisheries research, and coordination of fishery management among the Province of Ontario, the eight Great Lakes States,

and tribal governments. Great progress has been made on sea lamprey control, to the point where lake trout, whitefish, sturgeon, and other key species are returning to more abundant levels. Combined with the aggressive research agenda and strong collaboration among the fisheries management community, the \$7 billion dollar fishery in the Great Lakes is being restored and protected. Again, the Cities Initiative plays a key role in the Commission, with Dave Ullrich having served as a commissioner since 2006 and recently being named vice chair of the Commission.



Chicago, IL

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Green CiTTS

MARS

In January 2014, the Cities Initiative launched its Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service (www.glslcities.org/mars.cfm). With funding from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and in cooperation with the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources and the Clean Air Partnership, the Cities Initiative launched an interactive MARS portal, a series of MARS webinars, and is receiving funding from RBC Blue Water Project for two adaptation demonstration projects. The Cities Initiative has also entered into a Strategic partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to work collaboratively on a series of products for our members in support of their adaptation activities, with the support of a team of graduate students from the University of Michigan. A series of four webinars has also been offered to Quebec members, providing expert information on climate change and adaptation in the St. Lawrence region.



Flooded GO Train in Toronto. Credit: Toronto Star

Sustainable Municipal Water Management

In 2012, the Cities Initiative launched its Sustainable Municipal Water Management Framework (www.glslcities.org/initiatives/greencities/smwm.cfm), a common set of milestones and indicators that may be used by cities to measure their progress in moving towards more sustainable water management. This framework is the first of its kind in North America. Since that time, four cities have been developing Public Information Reports to communicate publicly on measuring their progress. This first round of ground breaking reports will be presented at the Cities Initiative annual meeting in Thunder Bay in June 2014, and one will receive the first Sustainable Municipal Water Management Reporting Award. To view the reports, please visit www.glslcities.org/initiatives/greencities/smwm.cfm#PublicReports.

Microplastics

The Cities Initiative launched an effort in late October 2013 to protect the Great Lakes from microplastics and their threat to water quality, habitat, fish, and wildlife. The strategy is to get the major producers of personal care products to phase these materials out of their goods, which some have agreed to do already. We have also engaged Environment Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to learn about their plans for dealing with this issue. Another important element of the effort is to educate our communities about the issue of microplastics in

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our waters. We are working closely with the 5 Gyers Institute in California, which has done a great deal of research and advocacy on this issue in the Oceans, and now the Great Lakes. Several Great Lakes states are proceeding with legislation to ban microplastics. To learn more, please visit <http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/microplastics.cfm>.

Water Conservation Framework

Members continue their work to conserve our freshwater resources. As the Cities Initiative Water Conservation Framework closes in on its seventh year, members continue to do good work on water conservation and efficiency efforts. To date, participating members have conserved over 121 billion gallons of water and continue to implement conservation measures and try innovative new approaches to water conservation. As we near the 2015 target, the Cities Initiative will begin to work with members to decide what the next phase of

the Water Conservation Framework will be, taking us out to 2025. To learn more, please visit <http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/water-conservation.cfm>.

Quebec Shoreline Access Study

Over the last year, the Cities Initiative conducted a study on public access to the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Through the study of past access, current context and future projects, the study identified the challenges and needs of Québec municipalities to maintain and increase public access to the River. By demonstrating that municipalities remain at the front line of this issue and describing relevant examples, the study aims to facilitate representation of elected municipal officials towards other levels of government on this topic.

EVENTS



Credit: Tom Buckhoe

2013 Annual Members Meeting and Conference in Marquette, Michigan

The Cities Initiative was warmly hosted by Mayor Johnny DePetro and the Superior Watershed Partnership for its 10th anniversary and 2013 annual member meeting and conference in Marquette, Michigan, June 19-21, 2013. The Cities Initiative membership passed nine resolutions to guide its policy direction for the coming year, of note carrying *Resolution #1 - Climate Impacts in the*

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region and Building Resilient Communities, which endorses the development and launch of the Resiliency and Adaptation Service for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipalities. Along with the resolution, the Cities Initiative released *Adaptation and Resiliency to Climate Change in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin*, a brief that provides a snapshot of the challenges faced by Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities as a result of climate change and extreme weather and what needs to be done to help them adapt and become more resilient. Other highlights of the conference included a stirring keynote address from Founding Cities Initiative Chair and former Mayor of Chicago, Richard M. Daley; three regional meetings for members to discuss issues and priorities pertinent to their localities; Mayor Sandra Cooper accepting the Wege Award on behalf of the Town of Collingwood; and the Region of Peel accepting the Most Innovative Water Conservation Method award. Finally, the membership was treated to the

unveiling of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Anthem, *Sacred Waters*, penned by Mayor George Heartwell, scored by his son, Damien Heartwell, and performed by the Marquette High School choir. Click [here](http://www.glslcities.org/annual-meetings/2013.cfm) for a video and recording of the anthem. To read more about the 2013 annual meeting and conference, please visit <http://www.glslcities.org/annual-meetings/2013.cfm>.



Mayor Daley at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

Credit: Tom Buckhoe

2014 Midyear Board Meeting in Windsor, Ontario

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative held its Midyear Board of Directors meeting in Windsor, ON, January 17, 2014. Hosted by Mayor Eddie Francis, the Board discussed several important issues including building regional consensus for a solution to the problem of Asian carp, the growing concern over the safe, efficient and harmonized conveyance of various forms of fossil energy throughout the region, planning for the first ever Ottawa Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Day, and membership and funding strategies for the organization. During a press conference, the Cities Initiative also launched the Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service (MARS). In addition to this work, the Board held a special session aimed at creating a vision for the future of the organization, with a 2025 horizon. This session allowed for a reflection on the first 10 years of the organization and an exercise on what to achieve in the future. Over the last few months, staff worked with the Board and membership to prepare a vision statement for the organization. The vision statement and supporting elements will be presented to the membership for approval at the 2014 Annual Meeting and Conference.

Quebec Regional Meetings

À quatre reprises au cours de la dernière année, plus d'une trentaine de maires et mairesses de villes et municipalités riveraines du fleuve Saint-Laurent se sont réunis à Québec à l'invitation de monsieur Régis Labeaume, maire de Québec, président de la Communauté métropolitaine de Québec et membre du conseil d'administration de l'Alliance.

Certaines de ces rencontres se sont tenues en présence de ministres du gouvernement du Québec. Ces activités constituent un véritable forum d'échanges, entre élus, sur des sujets d'intérêt communs aux villes et municipalités riveraines de tous les secteurs du fleuve. Peu importe la taille de la communauté d'où proviennent les élus, ils ont démontré en maintes occasions l'utilité d'échanger sur leurs défis communs et leur volonté de travailler ensemble à améliorer la qualité de vie de leurs concitoyens tout en assurant, pour le bénéfice des générations futures, un développement responsable.



Mayor Eddie Francis at the 2014 Midyear Meeting.

Credit: City of Windsor



Mayor and Chair Keith Hobbs at the 2014 Midyear Meeting. Credit: City of Windsor

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



Throughout 2013-2014, the Cities Initiative welcomed 10 new members bringing our total to 114 members by May 2014, representing approximately 17 million Canadian and U.S. citizens in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is only as strong as its membership. We owe a great deal of thanks to many member mayors who reached out to neighboring communities and encouraged them to join the Cities Initiative. We look forward to continuing our important work with our membership and welcoming new communities and mayors to the Cities Initiative. The newest members of the Cities Initiative are:

Mayor Jocelyne Bates, Sainte-Catherine, QC
Mayor Nelson Bedard, Portneuf, QC
Mayor Michael Estes, Traverse City, MI
Mayor Scott Griffiths, Washburn, WI
Reeve Maria Harding, Shuniah, ON
Mayor Sylvain Hudon, La Pocatière, QC
Regional Chair Emil Kolb, Peel Region, ON
Mayor Gary McNamara, Tecumseh, ON
Mayor Dayne Walling, Flint, MI
Warden Jean A. Lalonde,
Regional Municipality of Vaudreuil-Soulanges, QC

About Us

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of U.S. and Canadian mayors and other local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. By integrating their environmental, economic and social agendas, local governments are helping to sustain a resource that represents approximately 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for 40 million people, and is the foundation upon which a strong regional economy is based.



Longueuil, QC, marina, with Montreal, QC across the St. Lawrence River. Credit: Ville de Longueuil

Sincere Thanks

The Cities Initiative is grateful to all of its members and funders for their support, and we extend thanks to the Joyce Foundation, the Mott Foundation and the Wege Foundation who have been essential to our success over the years.

Information

David A. Ullrich, Executive Director
david.ullrich@glslcities.org
312-201-4516

Nicola Crawhall, Deputy Director
nicola.crawhall@rogers.com
416-407-5880

