

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Annual Report

2016-2017



Letter from the Chair

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

It has been an honor serving as Chair of the Cities Initiative this past year. I am proud of our continued work to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, working to ensure clean and safe water, keeping invasive species out of our waterways, and upholding the integrity of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and their sustainable management.

This year, more than any in recent past, has emphasized the role of cities to collaborate to ensure all orders of government in both Canada and the US give priority to and invest in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, at a level that matches the significance of this freshwater system.

Through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, local political support, and advocating to the US government, the US federal commitment of \$300 million for the restoration of the Great Lakes for 2017 has been renewed. Our efforts will have to continue to ensure the sustainability of the program in 2018 and beyond.

The Waukesha water diversion has also attracted attention and highlights the importance of watershed agreements in preserving our priceless drinking water resource. Transparency of the process and public consultation before any decision making remains an important issue.

The Cities Initiative allows mayors to come together, inform the public, raise awareness and work with other orders of government. Our goal remains not only to preserve the resource, but also to restore natural habitats, combat invasive species, such as Asian carp, and uphold agreements.

My year as Chair of the Cities Initiative has been one of the most rewarding, building relationships with several mayors of cities on the Great Lakes, such as Chicago and Milwaukee, to name a few. It is through developing alliances and sustaining relationships that we can defend the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. You can always count on me.

I am confident the Cities Initiative, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities, and other partners and stakeholders will be successful in helping to ensure the long-term health and vitality of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.



Sincerely,

Mayor Denis Coderre
Mayor of Montréal, Québec
Chair and Director, 2016-2017



Statement from the Executive Director

The Cities Initiative has transformed decision making on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence over the past 14 years by creating a major role for municipal governments. We were not even an afterthought in earlier years, and now are major players in virtually all important decisions, and often lead the way. My opportunity to work with mayors and their staff has been a highlight of my 44 year career protecting the environment. The dedication to public service, to communities, to the freshwater resource, and to getting the job done demonstrated by the members of this organization is impressive beyond words. The accountability and commitment to action and results has led to a much higher quality of life and economic well-being for Canadians and Americans all across the Basin. More and better things have happened faster because we have been involved. I am proud to have been a part of this wonderful enterprise and I thank every one of our member mayors, municipal staff and the staff of the Cities Initiative for your dedication to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, and for your friendship over the past 14 years.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Ullrich".

David A. Ullrich
Executive Director

Waukesha Water Diversion Application

In June 2016, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Water Resources Compact Council (Compact Council), comprised of representatives of the eight Great Lakes governors, approved the City of Waukesha's application to divert water from Lake Michigan for its drinking water. In response to direction from its board and membership, the Cities Initiative engaged Chicago law firm Jenner & Block on a pro bono basis, and initiated a formal challenge to the Compact Council's decision. The Cities Initiative expressed opposition to the diversion throughout the course of the application proceedings for a number of reasons, including the availability of reasonable water supply alternatives, the impact of the return flow on the Root River, and the approved service area size. The Cities Initiative was also disappointed with the public consultation provided during the review and approval process, with only one public hearing being held in Waukesha by the official reviewers and no opportunity to comment on the revised application. The Cities Initiative maintains that the decision to allow the Waukesha water diversion, the process followed, and Waukesha's application all set a dangerous precedent for future applications and threaten the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.



Attorney Jill Hutchison of Jenner & Block addresses the Compact Council at the Oral Argument hearing on April 20.

In April 2017, in response to the Cities Initiative's request for a hearing with the Compact Council to present our case, the Compact Council determined there was no need to reopen or modify their approval. The Cities Initiative remains committed to highlighting the dangerous precedent the Waukesha diversion creates for future applications and strengthening the Compact through our challenge. For updates, visit <https://glslcities.org/initiatives/basin-management/compact-and-agreement/>.



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Protection and Restoration Funding

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence system is the premier freshwater resource for the US and Canada, providing more than 48 million people with drinking water, supporting a \$5 trillion regional economy as well as recreation, energy, transportation, and ecosystems. The protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River should be a priority for all orders of government. The early signs from the current U.S. Administration are disconcerting. The fiscal year 2018 proposed federal budget eliminates the \$300 Million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and cuts the budgets of the US EPA and other federal agencies with oversight of Great Lakes management. In the spring of 2017, the Cities Initiative supported member municipalities in demonstrating the benefit of GLRI investment in protection and restoration. The Cities Initiative created a model resolution for municipal councils to pass – as of June 2017, 25 municipalities and organizations have passed resolutions – as well as a model letter to the editor, a fact sheet, and talking points. We will continue efforts to ensure all orders of government hear the mayors' call for federal investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.



Cities Initiative staff and Borough Mayor Chantal Rouleau of Montréal meet with U.S. Representative Dan Kildee to discuss the importance of continued GLRI funding to cities.

While federal funding for the lakes and river is not in jeopardy in Canada, funding to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence remains modest compared to investments made by the US government. During the 2016 Parliament Hill Day in Ottawa, the Cities Initiative, along with the Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR), the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), and Freshwater Future (representing a network of NGOs), proposed the creation of a multi-stakeholder process to develop a vision and blueprint for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence federal investment. The groups have been working on a discussion paper outlining a process for development and engagement of other stakeholders. Simultaneously, the De Gaspé Beaubien Foundation, the CGLR and the Cities Initiative have initiated a mapping study of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence issues and stakeholders. The study, partly funded by the MITACS research fund, will provide the multi-stakeholder process with an overall picture of the players, conflicting interests, and areas of collaboration. Through a series of workshops and meetings with key government officials, the Cities Initiative, CGLR, GLFC, and Freshwater Future will garner input into a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Collaborative Framework, which will be presented at the 2017 Parliament Hill Day.

Asian Carp

The Cities Initiative, through the efforts of Executive Director David Ullrich, continued work this past year to build regional consensus for physical separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins and prevent Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system. Unfortunately, transportation and barge interests have slowed momentum significantly on the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Advisory Committee. Momentum was further slowed by the delay of the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) Brandon Road Lock and Dam evaluation report. This study, conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers (US ACE), has engaged many stakeholders in the region in the evaluation of measures to keep Asian carp out of the system at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Addressing measures at Brandon Road provides critical interim protection for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River as we continue work to reach consensus on a permanent solution. The Cities Initiative helped secure intent for local sponsorship for the proposed US ACE work at Brandon Road from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, signifying commitment by local partners to additional interim protection. We will continue efforts to reach regional consensus on the physical separation solution and help inform and mediate the regional and national discourse on halting Asian carp. For updates, visit <https://glscities.org/initiatives/invasive-species/asian-carp/>.



Climate Change and the Global Covenant of Mayors

Our member cities remain committed to adapting to more extreme weather, building resiliency, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. In 2016, the membership passed a resolution urging all members to participate in the Global Covenant of Mayors (the Covenant), demonstrating municipal leadership on mitigation and adaptation. The Covenant offers a platform for cities to report on their greenhouse gas emissions inventories, set target reductions, and make plans for action. Currently, 21 members are participating. The Cities Initiative is seeking funding to hire staff in the U.S. and Canada to support members needing additional expertise. This staff would provide guidance to navigate the Covenant, lead webinars on how to meet the commitments, and act as a clearinghouse for best practices, resources, and information. While we haven't secured funding for this work yet, we recognize its importance and continue to search for ways to bring this service to the membership. For more information on our climate change related work, visit <https://glslcities.org/initiatives/>.



Regional Oil Transportation

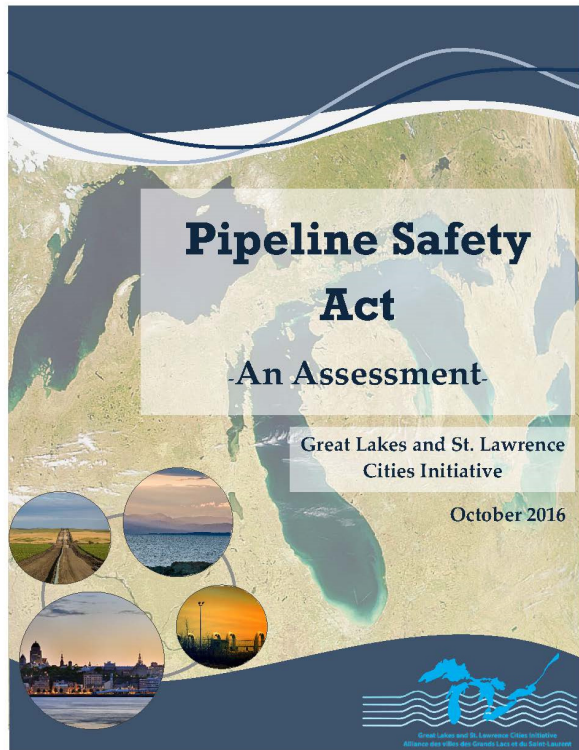
The Cities Initiative continues to monitor and comment as appropriate on regional oil transportation issues. As part of Parliament Hill Day in October 2016, the Cities Initiative presented its recommendations following our assessment of the new Canadian

Pipeline Safety Act to Minister of Natural Resources, Jim Carr. While the new Pipeline Safety Act is a great step forward to increase protection of Canadian citizens and the environment, the Cities Initiative feels the law allows too much discretion around spills and should explicitly recognize local government.

The Cities Initiative also commented on Enbridge's Line 5, a set of twin pipelines more than 60 years old under the Straits of Mackinac. Many municipalities and stakeholders in the region have expressed concern over Line 5 given its age, state, and location. The Cities Initiative issued a letter to the Michigan Pipeline Safety Advisory Board calling for more public outreach and engagement during their risk analysis, which is scheduled for completion this summer.

Finally, the Cities Initiative issued comments regarding nearly 100 year old pipelines under the St. Clair River that were being considered for crude oil transportation. Plains LPG Services was seeking a Presidential Permit Authorization in the spring of 2016 to use two St. Clair River pipelines for crude oil and other hydrocarbons. Thanks to concern raised by the Great Lakes community, led by the Cities Initiative, the company abandoned the project.

The Cities Initiative will continue representing the perspective of local governments on oil transportation, balancing the importance of oil and fossil fuel products to the region, with the need to protect our communities, citizens, and the environment. For updates, visit <https://glslcities.org/initiatives/oil-transport/>.



Nutrients

Nutrient pollution into our waterways remains a priority issue for the mayors of the Cities Initiative. In Ontario, the Cities Initiative has worked in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) since December 2015 to develop the *Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative* (PRC), addressing phosphorus loss into the Thames River, and ultimately Lake Erie. Over the last year, we worked with OFA and other local partners such as First Nations, commodity groups, agribusiness, conservation authorities, NGOs, drainage professionals, and municipalities to develop the five-year strategy. In December 2016, the project received a \$203,000 CDN grant from the Canada-Ontario agriculture funding program Growing Forward 2; participating organizations also contributed \$100,000 as a match. A PRC Steering Committee has been established to guide implementation of the strategy, chaired by Cities Initiative board member Mayor Randy Hope of Chatham-Kent, and OFA board member Mark Reusser. In the coming year, OFA and the Cities Initiative will reach out to farmers and landowners and other interested parties, gather best practices related to water retention on agricultural land and improved drainage measures, and explore viable technologies to remove phosphorus from run-off before it reaches the Thames River.



Québec mayors gather for the inaugural meeting of the Lac St. Pierre Mayors Caucus in member city Sorel-Tracy.

At the January 2017 midyear Board meeting, Cities Initiative mayors expressed interest in addressing nutrient pollution in Lac St-Pierre, located on the St. Lawrence River. Nutrients from the tributaries and intensive agricultural practices on the banks of the lake have generated a dramatic decline in fish stock. Protection and restoration of Lac St-Pierre will require extensive engagement from all orders of government and stakeholders. Cities Initiative members Mayor Serge Péloquin of Sorel-Tracy and Mayor Yves Lévesque of Trois-Rivières, with support from the Cities Initiative, have formed the Lac St. Pierre Mayors Caucus with other local mayors. The first meeting was convened in March 2017 and the mayors are already planning another meeting soon. In the coming year we anticipate the caucus will help improve engagement of the federal and provincial governments and agriculture on the issue of nutrients entering Lac St-Pierre.

We continue efforts to jumpstart on the ground action in U.S. as well by engaging local partners in southeastern Michigan and northwestern Ohio on the issue. This past year we provided comments and advice on the State of Ohio's nutrient strategy as well as the development of the U.S. draft Domestic Action Plan called for under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Canada has released their draft Domestic Action Plan for comment and the Cities Initiative has submitted comments. To stay informed on our nutrients work, visit <https://glslcities.org/initiatives/nutrients/>.

Engagement of Inter-Parliamentary Group

This year the Cities Initiative worked with the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. to facilitate a meeting between the Canadian Inter-parliamentary Group (IPG) and the US Congressional Great Lakes Taskforce on March 21, 2017. The meeting provided an opportunity for the IPG delegation to discuss with Taskforce members how it achieves bipartisan compromise on Great Lakes issues. The legislators also discussed Great Lakes issues of mutual interest, such as combatting invasive species, economic development through reduced trade barriers, and transportation infrastructure. Members expressed interest in another joint meeting later this year.

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Advisory Boards

The Cities Initiative has established itself as the voice for local government on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. An integral part of our work is representing local government at a number of key policy and decision-making tables, and helping to ensure the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence remain a priority with other orders of government and stakeholders. This past year we were involved on: the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC), the Great Lakes Water Quality Board (GLWQB) and various annex subcommittees, to monitor and encourage implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement; the Great Lakes Advisory Board (GLAB) to inform how Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding should be invested; and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), to monitor efforts to manage the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes and safeguard the lake fisheries. David Ullrich serves as Chair of the GLWQB, GLAB, and GLFC, providing a strong presence for municipalities. This work is largely behind the scenes but guarantees that the local government perspective is considered in major policy decisions for the lakes and river.



Inaugural Parliament Hill Day in Ottawa

The Cities Initiative, along with the Council of the Great Lakes Region, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and leading NGOs including Freshwater Future, Strategies Saint Laurent, Alliance for the Great Lakes, Canadian Environmental Law Association, le Regroupement des organismes de bassins versants du Québec, and Environmental Defence Canada, organized and participated in a successful inaugural Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Parliament Hill Day on October 27, 2016. Cities Initiative member mayors in attendance included Mayor Sandra Cooper (Collingwood), Mayor Paul Dyster (Niagara Falls, NY), Mayor Randy Hope (Chatham-Kent), Mayor Denis Lapointe (Salaberry-de-Valleyfield), Borough Mayor Chantal Rouleau (Montréal), and Mayor Mitch Twolan (Huron-Kinloss). During Parliament Hill Day, the mayors, along with partners from the other organizations, met with a number of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and opposition leaders. The groups requested that the Government of Canada join with them to develop a common vision and roadmap to ensure the long-term health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem and economy. To learn more about Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Parliament Hill Day, please visit glslcities.org/events/great-lakes-st-lawrence-day-parliament-hill/.



Elected officials, including six Cities Initiative members, gather at the House of Commons in Ottawa for a reception with former Ambassador Bruce Heyman and dozens of parliamentarians.

Great Lakes Days in Washington, D.C.



Cities Initiative staff and Mayors Rouleau and Dickert meet with the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, in D.C. for Great Lakes Days.

The Cities Initiative and its mayors participated in force at the 2017 Great Lakes Days in Washington D.C. in March. This annual event led by the Healing Our Water Coalition is an opportunity for the Great Lakes region to inform federal government representatives and agency heads of the region's priorities. Mayor John Dickert (Racine) and Borough Mayor Rouleau, along with Cities Initiative staff - David Ullrich, Nicola Crawhall and Simon Belisle – represented the organization. Priorities that the group emphasized in their meetings with various Congressional representatives, staffers and Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, included: funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; the need to act on aquatic invasive species, especially Asian carp in the Chicago Area Waterway System; taking action to reduce nutrients entering our lakes and waterways; the growing water infrastructure investment gap in the region; and increased Great Lakes-St. Lawrence collaboration between the U.S. and Canada.

Parliament Hill Day at the Québec National Assembly

On May 11, 2017, a Cities Initiative delegation held a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Day at the provincial legislature in Québec City. The objective was to discuss with parliamentarians some of the most relevant issues facing the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, including: nutrients in Lac St. Pierre, invasive species, the federal budgets, and the St. Lawrence River flooding of early May 2017. The delegation included Mayor Lapointe, Deputy Mayor Michelle Morin-Doyle (Québec City), Mayor Pélouquin, and Borough Mayor Rouleau. The delegation and parliamentarians agreed to keep the lines of communication open on these important issues.

Mayor Pélouquin, Borough Mayor Rouleau, Deputy Mayor Morin-Doyle, and Mayor Lapointe gather in Québec City for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Day.



2016 Annual Meeting

Mayor Dyster and his staff hosted the Cities Initiative and its membership for the 2016 Annual Meeting in Niagara Falls, New York. The event was a success with the magnificent backdrop of the falls as a reminder of the power of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Member mayors and staff participated in panel discussions on issues including lead in drinking water, climate change adaptation, harmful algal blooms, and municipal sustainability initiatives. To review presentations and resolutions from the 2016 annual meeting, please visit <https://glsicities.org/events/annual-meeting/niagara-falls-ny-2016/>.



Former mayor and Cities Initiative member, MP Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre) addresses the 2016 AGM.



2017 Midyear Meeting

The Cities Initiative Board of Directors met in Montréal, Québec in January for its midyear Board of Directors Meeting. Chair of the Cities Initiative, Mayor Coderre, hosted, and participating directors included Mayor Tom Barrett (Milwaukee), Mayor Cooper (by phone), Mayor Dickert, Mayor Dyster (by phone), Mayor Lapointe, Mayor Régis Labeaume (Québec Metropolitan Community), Deputy Mayor Morin-Doyle, and Mayor Twolan, as well as several municipal staff representatives (right). The Board addressed a number of topics, including the Waukesha water diversion challenge, nutrients pollution, climate change and the Global Covenant of Mayors, plastics pollutions in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, and more.

Transition in Leadership

In preparation for David Ullrich's retirement in the summer of 2017, the Cities Initiative began its search for leadership in January 2017 after a year-long succession planning process. Guided by consultant Sheila Leahy, a search committee comprised of Board members received and vetted applicants for the position. In March, an offer was extended to and accepted by current Racine, WI Mayor John Dickert (right). Mayor Dickert will be stepping down as mayor and joining the Cities Initiative as the new President and Chief Administrative Officer sometime over the summer. The Cities Initiative is excited about this new chapter for the organization and thankful to David for laying a strong foundation upon which we can continue to grow. David will continue as a senior advisor to the Cities Initiative.



Membership

Over the past year we have welcomed seven new members to the Cities Initiative, growing the organization to 130 members: City Commission President Dennis Murray and the City of Sandusky, OH; Mayor Alan Barfoot, representing the Township of Georgian Bluffs, ON and as Warden for Grey County, ON; Mayor Ted Luciani and the City of Thorold, ON; Mayor John Antaramian and the City of Kenosha, WI; Mayor Geneviève Dubois and the City of Nicolet, QC; and Mayor Sonya Auclair and the City of Batiscan, QC.

We were fortunate to welcome two new Board members well, both of whom stepped in to complete unfinished director terms. Thank you to Mayor Emily Larson of Duluth, MN and Mayor Jim Carruthers of Traverse City, MI for covering the remaining terms and providing support and leadership.



Staff

At the end of 2016, our long-standing Deputy Director Nicola Crawhall moved on to new challenges. Nicola provided exceptionally strong leadership for us in Canada during her tenure. We have been fortunate to retain Nicola on contract to work on the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative, and support efforts for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative and engagement of other orders of government in Canada. We are in the process of seeking a new Deputy Director in Canada for the organization.

We were happy to welcome Andrea Paine to the Cities Initiative in September 2016 as our new Program and Administrative Assistant. A 2016 graduate of the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, Andrea comes to the Cities Initiative with previous Great Lakes-related work experience at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. She hit the ground running and has provided a great deal of support and initiative on a number of projects.

We have been fortunate to engage with a number of stellar student interns over the past year. We continue work with the NASA DEVELOP program through which student interns utilize NASA satellite imagery and data to address Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River problems. This past year, the team used imagery and data to analyze trends in harmful algal blooms and water quality in Lake Erie. We are looking forward to a presentation by the NASA student team at our 2017 Annual Meeting in Montréal this June.

We continue the internship program with the Québec government, whereby the Québec government sponsors a graduate student intern for six months to support our overall work, with an emphasis on Québec. The interns are especially helpful in supporting our Québec member municipalities. We were fortunate to host Catherine Boyd-Michaud last year and we just welcomed Marissa Gravel-Labelle.

Finally, we hosted an intern through our relationship with the University of Western Ontario Law School last summer, Adriana Forest. She provided a great deal of support to the organization on a number of issues, in particular our work on the Waukesha water diversion application. We have just welcomed Daniel Kolanko for the summer, through the same program.



Former Deputy Director Nicola Crawhall with Executive Director David Ullrich and Cities Initiative Chair Mayor Coderre at the 2017 Mid Year Meeting in Montréal.

Gratitude

We would like to extend our deep appreciation to our member mayors and municipalities for their continued support and commitment to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

We would also like to thank the Joyce Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Wege Foundation and the Crown Family Foundation for their ongoing support of our work.

Thank you as well to the Chicago law firm Jenner & Block for their outstanding legal representation provided to us pro bono. Thank you to Matt Field for his work to develop the *Success Stories: the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative* video.



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