



NEWS

Ontario's Great Lakes Beaches and Coasts To Benefit From Collaboration

Ministers and Mayors Meet At Summit

NEWS

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Ontario's beaches and coastlines and those who love them will benefit from closer collaboration between the province and municipalities on the Great Lakes.

That's one of the outcomes of a ministers and mayors summit on the Great Lakes held at Ontario Place today and co-hosted by the province and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

Ontario Minister of Environment, John Gerretsen, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey, and Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Carol Mitchell met with eight Ontario Great Lakes mayors.

The ministers and mayors agreed to work together to protect the health of beaches and coastal areas. They will create a new provincial-municipal beaches and coastal areas network to bring experts together to share information and best management practices.

Provincial and municipal investments in wastewater infrastructure improvements will also improve water quality and the health of beaches and coasts. Ontario Great Lakes municipalities invest more than \$900 million annually in wastewater infrastructure. Ontario has committed an additional \$653 million since 2007.

The province and the Cities Initiative are also working on two joint wastewater and stormwater projects designed to update sewage bypass and overflow requirements, and to assist municipalities to reduce the amount of stormwater entering the lakes.

The ministers and mayors renewed a two year collaborative Memorandum of Cooperation to discuss Great Lakes priorities including the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. The province will consider municipal concerns when negotiating a new agreement with the federal government.

QUOTES

"Ontario values its partnership with municipalities in working to protect the Great Lakes. This is a critical year to gather input from our municipal partners as we start to work with

our federal partners to develop the next Canada-Ontario Agreement. We want to make sure that the municipal voice is reflected in the next agreement.”

— John Gerretsen, Ontario Minister of the Environment

“Maintaining the quality of the Great Lakes, including the ecosystems and economies they support, is a responsibility Ontario shares with partners including cities in the United States and Canada. Through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Ontario is helping build a healthy and sustainable future. The Great Lakes are a precious natural resource and the partnerships we form will help maintain and enhance this resource for future generations.”

— Linda Jeffrey, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources

“Ontario’s farmers and residents of our rural communities are excellent stewards of the Great Lakes - they recognize that their success is tied to the health of our waterways. Together we are working to protect, restore, and manage our precious water resources so we can further strengthen our rural communities and help build a more prosperous future.”

— Carol Mitchell, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

“All orders of government must continue working together to protect one of this province’s greatest natural assets, the Great Lakes. Our joint commitments today will result in improved Great Lakes beaches. Toronto’s beaches contribute to the quality of life in our city and I am proud that Toronto was the first community in Canada to certify its beaches under the international Blue Flag program. We look forward to sharing our experiences as beach managers with other communities around the Great Lakes.”

— David Miller, Mayor of Toronto

“For many communities along Georgian Bay, we are eager to work together to improve our beaches and coasts. We have made a start with the Southern Georgian Bay Coastal Initiative, and look forward to sharing the results of this work with other communities, provinces and states.”

— Ellen Anderson, Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains

“In the City of Thunder Bay, we have invested over 100 million dollars in significant new upgrades to our waste water treatment plant, and collection systems which will help protect Lake Superior.”

— Lynn Peterson, Mayor, City of Thunder Bay

QUICK FACTS

- 98 per cent of Ontarians call the watersheds of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River home, most situated along the shorelines in eight of Canada’s largest cities.
- Over 70 per cent of Ontarians get their drinking water directly from the lakes.

- 95 per cent of Ontario's farm cash receipts come from the Great Lakes region.
- Over \$7-billion annually is injected into Ontario's economy from Great Lakes fishing and shipping.
- The Great Lakes Basin ecosystem is home to more than 3,500 species of plants and animals, some of which are found no where else on earth.
- Ontario has more than 200 Great Lakes beaches and thousands of kilometres of mainland and island coastlines.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#).

Learn more about the [Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem](#).

Learn about the [Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement](#).

Learn about the [International Joint Commission's](#) role in Great Lakes protection.

Find out more about [Ontario's Great Lakes collaborations](#).

Get information about [the biodiversity of the Great Lakes](#).

Find out more about [how Ontario farmers are helping the Great Lakes](#).

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