



Elimination of Great Lakes Funds Shocks Mayors

Chicago, March 16, 2017 – Earlier today the Trump Administration released its 2018 budget which eliminates the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Gutting GLRI from the budget is especially appalling to members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative), a binational coalition of 128 mayors, given the success of and bipartisan support for the program. GLRI has been integral over the last eight years in helping clean up toxic hotspots, better manage polluted storm water runoff, addressing invasive species, and protecting habitats and wildlife. The elimination of GLRI is part of a larger effort by the Trump Administration to scale back Environmental Protection Agency funding by 31.4 percent.

“I believe the American Government's budget does not reflect the great importance of these environmental questions related to climate change and water issues, and that we all have, at every level of government, a responsibility in this regard,” says Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, chairman of the Cities Initiative. “We shall continue to express our strong solidarity and will speak with one united unwavering voice against these unacceptable budget cuts.”

“The Great Lakes are a national treasure similar to the Grand Canyon and it is not solely the responsibility of state and local governments to invest in their protection,” added Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, New York, Vice Chair of the Cities Initiative. “Local governments already invest over \$15 billion per year and rely on investment from the federal government for Great Lakes restoration and protection efforts.”

Mayor Sandra Cooper of the Town of Collingwood, Ontario, Secretary of the Cities Initiative said, “All levels of government on both sides of the border have a moral responsibility to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for future generations. A complete elimination of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will put a halt to successful restoration efforts and the Lakes at a risk of degradation.”

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of 128 cities from the United States and Canada representing over 17 million people who work together for the long term protection and restoration of the resource. The mayors work closely with state, provincial, federal, tribal, first nation, and non-government representatives from across the basin to protect, restore, and sustain one of the largest freshwater resources in the world.

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