



Mayors Oppose Waukesha Water Diversion

Heads of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities also commit to collective greenhouse gas reductions

Niagara Falls, NY, June 16, 2016 – Today, Mayors from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin confirmed their opposition to the City of Waukesha’s application to divert water out of the Great Lakes Basin, as they gathered in Niagara Falls, NY for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative’s annual meeting and conference. The mayors are speaking out today in advance of the Compact Council meeting on June 21, 2016 where a decision is expected to be made.

Racine, WI, Mayor John Dickert said: “There is clear evidence that Waukesha has reasonable alternatives to provide safe drinking water to its citizens, and I do not want to see their effluent contaminate the Root River in downtown Racine. Local government across this Region and in both the US and Canada are calling on the Governors of eight Great Lakes states to reject Waukesha’s application and protect these vital waters we cherish.”

The 123 mayors of the Cities Initiative are also leading on climate change by working with the United Nations’ Compact of Mayors, an international group of mayors brought together by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, to collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The organization committed to working towards 50% of its members signing up to the Compact of Mayors by the end of 2017 and 100 % by the end of 2019. So far, 20 member cities representing almost 10 million Great Lakes and St. Lawrence citizens have committed to track and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and others are already proceeding with actions.

“Through this collective action, the Great-Lakes St. Lawrence Region, which represents the 3rd largest economy in the world, is showing leadership in the global fight against climate change” said Mayor Denis Coderre of Montreal, QC, “If we can do it here, we can do it everywhere. We will set a positive example to the world.”

Also at the conference, the Cities Initiative approved a collaborative strategy to reduce phosphorus entering the Thames River through improvements to farmland water management and drainage. The Thames River has been identified as a primary source of phosphorus entering Lake Erie from the Canadian side. The Canadian and US Governments have agreed to reduce phosphorus entering Lake Erie by 40%. Through a partnership with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the water management and drainage collaborative strategy has been developed to reduce the transportation of phosphorus off farmland, particularly during sudden snow melts and severe storms.

“When Mayors and farmers work together, we can make great things happen,” said Mitch Twolan, outgoing chair of the Cities Initiative and mayor of the Township of Huron-Kinloss, “Our

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Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montréal, Chair

Paul Dyster, Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York, Vice-Chair

Sandra Cooper, Mayor of Collingwood, Secretary-Treasurer



collaborative phosphorus reduction strategy will improve water quality and reduce phosphorus loss from farmland, making a win-win situation.”

Resolutions adopted during the Cities Initiative Annual Member Meeting addressed the threat of Asian carp, microbeads, radioactive waste, drinking water safety, pipeline safety, integrated water management, confined animal-feeding operations, sewer overflows and Phragmites. For more information on the resolutions adopted at the meeting, please visit: <http://glslcities.org/communications/resolutions/by-year/>.

The Cities Initiative elected Mayor Denis Coderre, of Montreal, QC as chair of the organization, Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, NY as vice-chair and Mayor Sandra Cooper of Collingwood, ON, as secretary-treasurer for the coming year.

The Town of the Blue Mountains was awarded the Wege Small Cities Sustainability Award at the conference. The award, sponsored by the Wege Foundation, is given to a community with a population of less than 100,000 as seed money for a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence project that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects and that can be used as a best practice in other communities. The Town of the Blue Mountains received the award for efforts to install solar-powered LED lights in parking lots and other areas in need of illumination around the community.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 123 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal, and first nation governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. For more information, please visit glslcities.org.

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