



## **SUCCESS FOR THE GREAT LAKES: WIIN ACT SIGNED INTO LAW BY OBAMA**

**Chicago, IL, December 19, 2016** - The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is very pleased the United States Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. WIIN includes many provisions that are critically important to the Great Lakes. It includes authorization of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for five years at \$300 million per year, provides support for shipping, addresses the algal bloom problem, allocates funding to solve the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and strengthens programs to improve fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes.

Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, current vice-chair of the Cities Initiative, said, “The passage of this law is critically important to the future of the tremendous freshwater resource we share between Canada and the United States and to our communities, and ensures that the momentum developed over the past five years in protecting and restoring the resource will be maintained.”

Cities Initiative Executive Director David Ullrich added, “Many of our member cities have received funding under GLRI, which has allowed them to complete restoration projects that otherwise would not have been possible. These projects contribute to the economic well-being and quality of life in our communities, and make them more attractive for locating a new business and as a destination for visitors.”

The actions by this Congress and the President are essential to the future of many programs that are important to the Great Lakes, and it will be important for the next Congress to fund these programs at levels that will ensure their success.

The legislation includes the following Great Lakes provisions:

- Authorizes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a successful and popular program that is helping states and local communities clean up degraded toxic hotspots, restore habitat for fish and wildlife, thwart Asian carp and other invasive species, and prevent polluted runoff across the eight-state Great Lakes region
- Makes permanent the allocation of priority funds from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for the Great Lakes Navigation System, sets a minimum appropriations level from the fund, and requires the Army Corps of Engineers to complete guidance on managing the Great Lakes as a single, comprehensive navigation system
- Establishes a Great Lakes Harmful Algal Bloom Coordinator to work with federal, state and local agencies to coordinate actions to address harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes



- Includes a variety of provisions that respond to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and support the work of states and local communities to repair, upgrade and monitor water infrastructure
- Reauthorizes and strengthens the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act and the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program, which support fish and wildlife restoration, conservation and management projects in the Great Lakes region

*The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 127 mayors representing over 17 million people, that works to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. For more information, please visit [www.gslcities.org](http://www.gslcities.org).*

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