



Embargoed until Thursday, June 20, 2013 at 1:45 EDT, 12:45 pm CDT

Media Backgrounder

From June 19-21, 2013, American and Canadian mayors from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin, representing over sixteen million people, met in Marquette for the 10th anniversary annual conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

Resolutions

The annual membership meeting of the Cities Initiative was as lively as ever, grappling with nine important issues facing Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors. The following resolutions were adopted by the members: (<http://www.glsocities.org/annual-meetings/2013.cfm>)

- 1) A resolution recognizing the urgency of climate adaptation, expressing support for the Cities Initiative's Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Service for members, and calling on governments to provide increased support for municipal adaptation activity;
- 2) A resolution expressing concern over low water levels and calling on the US and Canadian federal governments to coordinate their efforts to find solutions to the problem, provide financial support to impacted communities, and requesting further research on the causes of low water levels, particularly the dredging of the St. Clair River;
- 3) A resolution that recognises the urgency of keeping Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes, and calls on governments to consider physical separation of the Mississippi from Lake Michigan as the ultimate solution to this problem, and short term actions to prevent Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes in the interim;
- 4) A resolution renewing the mayors' commitment to protecting the Great Lakes, and acknowledging the good work that has been done together in the first ten years of the Cities Initiative's activities;
- 5) A resolution on the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP) that calls on the federal and Quebec governments to recognize the role of municipalities in the SLAP, including active participation in the regional groups, and the creation of a federal-provincial- municipal discussion group under the SLAP;
- 6) A resolution calling on federal, state and provincial governments to improve their support for the restoration and protection work of shoreline communities and allow for greater flexibility in the regulation of shoreline activities to meet the needs of shoreline municipalities;
- 7) A resolution calling on the Canadian and American federal governments to conduct a study of water demand based on population growth projections through to 2050, and to distribution results throughout the basin;
- 8) A resolution seeking endorsement of a motion from the city council of Sault Ste. Marie concerning ballast water standards and calling on Canadian and US governments to enact uniform ballast water standards;
- 9) A resolution seeking endorsement of the City of Racine's proposed priorities for US federal funding on the Great Lakes.



Awards

At the conference, the Cities Initiative presented an award for most innovation in water conservation. Since the introduction of the Cities Initiative Water Conservation Framework in 2007, 33 cities have committed to working towards a 15 percent reduction (below year 2000 water use levels) by the year 2015. We are pleased to report that, as of this year, half of the participants have already achieved an 18 percent reduction in water consumption, conserving approximately 109 billion gallons or 400 billion liters of water cumulatively.

The award for innovation in water conservation was presented to Peel Region, Ontario.

The *Wege Small Cities Sustainability Award* was also presented at the conference. This award is given to a community with a population of less than 100,000 for a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence project that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects and that can be used as a best practice in other communities. This year's Wege Award was presented to Collingwood, Ontario for its Community Pathways Initiative.

Green CITTs's Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency Service

At the conference, the Cities Initiative announced its Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Service to support and accelerate the adaptation and resiliency activity of its member municipalities. The service will provide municipalities with a one-stop shop for information on climate change and adaptation, and a forum to exchange the experiential learning of its members. The Great Lakes Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Service will run for 18 months to 2 years, beginning in the Fall of 2013 in Ontario. The service will consist of:

- An interactive community of practice portal maintained by the Ontario Climate Centre for Impacts and Adaptation Resources (OCCIAR) (<http://www.climateontario.ca/>) that allows members to share information and experiences with each other and that provides comprehensive information on climate change adaptation, including case studies, weather and climate information, a library of relevant documents and websites, and recordings of training webinars; A facilitated service with staff available by phone to answer questions of municipal staff, as well as direct them to relevant online resources;
- Training hosted by the Clean Air Partnership (<http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/>), via webinars with regionally focused case studies presented by member municipalities;
- A pledge by members to undertaken adaptation measures within 2-5 years backed up by an award for progress to encourage participating cities.

New Board and Executive Members

At the meeting, Mayor Keith Hobbs of Thunder Bay, ON was elected the 2013-2014 Chair of the Cities Initiative, succeeding Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee.

Mayor Régis Labeaume of the Quebec Metropolitan Community is the new Vice-Chair.

Mayor John Dickert of Racine, WI is the new Secretary/Treasurer.

Next year's Annual Conference

The 2013 Cities Initiative Annual General Meeting will be hosted by the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario.