



Party Address

Dear Party Leader,

Please find attached questions from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative concerning your party's position on issues of importance to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. This questionnaire is being sent to the five main parties in this Federal election.

Could you kindly return the completed questionnaire by **Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015** to our Deputy Director, Nicola Crawhall at [nicola.crawhall@rogers.com](mailto:nicola.crawhall@rogers.com). The responses from the parties will be released publicly and posted on our website during the campaign.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national, non-partisan association of over 110 mayors and heads of council, representing over 17 million Great Lakes and St. Lawrence citizens. The mayors are collectively dedicated to the protection, restoration, and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. If you have any questions concerning this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Nicola Crawhall, Deputy Director, at (416) 407-5880, or [nicola.crawhall@rogers.com](mailto:nicola.crawhall@rogers.com).

Thank you in advance for the time devoted to answering these questions and best of luck in your campaign.

Sincerely,

Mitch Twolan, Mayor  
Township of Huron-Kinloss, ON  
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



## Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2015 Canadian Federal Election Questionnaire

### Topic 1: Asian Carp

#### **Introduction**

One of the greatest threats ever from aquatic invasive species to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence is Asian carp, including silver, bighead, black, and grass. If these species were to establish a population in the Great Lakes, the region's \$7B commercial and recreational fisheries would be seriously threatened. Asian carp have been migrating up the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Wabash, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and other rivers over the past 40 years.

Grass carp have already been found in the Grand River in Ontario. Only days ago, two carp were found in ponds connected to Lake Ontario on the shoreline of Toronto. This evidence of Asian Carp entering Canadian waters is extremely alarming.

At the Cities Initiative Annual General meeting, mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence declared that time is of the essence to reach a regional consensus on a long term solution. December 15, 2015 should be the outside date for accomplishing that goal. Furthermore, it is essential that the necessary short and mid-term actions to reduce the risk of Asian carp reaching Lake Michigan proceed on an expedited basis.

#### **Question**

If your party forms the next Government of Canada, what actions will you take to ensure that a regional and bi-national consensus is reached with our American partners by the end of 2015 on short, mid-term actions and a long term solution to this threat to our shared waters?

Please provide your answer in the gray box below. It will expand when text is entered, with no character limit.



## Topic 2: Transportation of Oil by Rail

### **Introduction**

Transportation of oil by rail has increased 40 fold in the past five years, now standing at over 500,000 cars annually. The derailment of a train carrying crude oil from the Bakken oilfield on July 6, 2013, in Lac-Mégantic, Québec, causing the tragic death of 47 people, destruction of half of the downtown area and the release of 1.3 million gallons of oil, was a wake-up call for both Canada and the United States about the dangers posed by this mode of transportation.

Despite introduction of new safety measures following this tragedy, there were five serious derailments of trains carrying oil in the first ten weeks of 2015, averaging one every two weeks, in Gogama, Ontario (February 14, 2015), Mount Carbon, West Virginia (February 18, 2015), Hornepayne, Ontario (March 5, 2015), Galena, Illinois (March 5, 2015), and again in Gogama (March 7, 2015).

This summer, the Canadian and US Governments adopted further safety measures to reduce the risk of derailments of trains carrying oil. While these new rules provide some improvement in the safety of transporting oil by rail, further measures are needed.

At its 2015 annual general meeting, the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative called on Canada and the US to immediately adopt additional measures to provide the highest level of security for our communities and for the water resources of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin.

### **Question**

If your party forms the next Government of Canada, will you commit to further strengthening safety measures for the transportation of oil by rail, particularly in the five following areas:

- i. Expediting mandatory scheduling for introducing enhanced standards for new and existing tank cars and phasing out old, unsafe tank cars;
- ii. Requiring the mandatory use of electronically controlled pneumatic brakes on all cars transporting crude oil;
- iii. Adjusting speed control regulations to all situations requiring risk management, not only in highly populated areas, where speed limitations are already part of operations;
- iv. Requiring more frequent inspections of rail lines and tankers;
- v. Imposing heavy fines for violations of the above rules.

Please provide your answer in the gray box below. It will expand when text is entered, with no character limit.



### Topic 3: Nutrients

#### **Introduction**

Harmful algal blooms have a direct adverse impact on the Great Lakes aquatic ecosystem, drinking water, water quality, quality of life and economy. Harmful algal blooms can contain microcystin, a neurotoxin to humans and wildlife that ingest it. A harmful algal bloom in the western basin of Lake Erie caused the Toledo drinking water utility to advise over 400,000 citizens not to drink the water for two days in August 2014.

If broad and swift action is not taken to reduce phosphorus and other nutrients entering the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and their tributaries, harmful algal blooms will continue to proliferate and threaten the health and vitality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system.

Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (WQA), the US and Canadian governments have committed to setting nutrient reduction targets by 2016 and completing action plans by 2018 to reduce nutrient levels in Lake Erie. Draft targets were released this summer for comment. While this process is welcome, it is proceeding on a slow schedule and no deadlines have yet been set to reach phosphorus reduction targets.

Meanwhile, the States of Michigan and Ohio, and the Province of Ontario have set a bold target of 20% reduction in phosphorus loadings to Western Lake Erie by 2020 and 40% reduction by 2025 under the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, signed in June of this year.

At its 2015 Annual General Meeting, the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence urged the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States to develop and implement short term actions for nutrient reductions in advance of their 2018 Action Plan.

#### **Questions**

Please provide your answers in the gray boxes below. They will expand when text is entered, with no character limit.

1. If your party forms the next Government of Canada, will you commit to the expedited targets in the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, as adopted by the States of Michigan and Ohio and the Province of Ohio, to reach 20% phosphorus loading reductions to Western Lake Erie by 2020 and 40% reduction by 2025?

2. Will you expedite the review of Health Canada's microcystin drinking water standard and protocol, particularly with respect to its application to children?