



Media Backgrounder

Cities Initiative launches a Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service

Global Climate Change brings extremes in heat, cold

The New Year demonstrated the extremes of global climate impacts, from record-breaking 50 degree Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit) heat in Australia to extreme cold in central and eastern Canada and the continental US that saw temperatures drop to -50 degrees Celsius (-58 degrees Fahrenheit) in some areas of the Great Lakes region.

As the world surpassed the threshold of 400 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in 2013, climatologists say that extreme weather will become more common globally and in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region.

Climate Impacts in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region

Our member municipalities have already experienced extreme weather. A tornado in Goderich in 2011 tragically caused one death and \$150 million in damages. Flooding in Duluth and Thunder Bay in June 2012 caused \$100 million and \$44 million dollars in damages in these respective cities. Intense rain storms and flooding in Grand Rapids in 2013 caused over \$1 million in damages to public facilities.

Climate change in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is expected to result in 15-30 more days over 35°C/95°F, 10-20% more rain in the winter and spring seasons, snow days reduced by half and replaced by rain, and a doubling in the frequency of severe storms.

Adapting to the impacts of climate change means anticipating and preparing for more erratic weather - extreme heat and cold, prolonged drought, monthly averages in precipitation falling in a matter of hours, hurricane force winds, rapid spring snow melt, lower water levels.

Planning ahead by adapting municipal infrastructure, operations and services and preparing for these types of extremes can save lives, reduce property damage and avoid costs to the municipality.



Expanding and Accelerating Adaptation and Resiliency in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is launching a Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service (**MARS**) for its member municipalities, to help them accelerate and expand their adaptation activities, to be ready for the next storm.

The Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service, is designed to help municipalities of any size and at any stage of the adaptation process. The Service consists of:

- 1- A **Call to Action** by Cities Initiative member municipalities, describing what adaptation efforts their municipality will be undertaking over the next two years. The Calls to Action will be posted on our adaptation website to share with other member municipalities.
- 2- A **Climate Adaptation Community of Practice** for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence member municipalities, facilitated by the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources (OCCIAR). A Community of Practice portal (www.ccadaptation.ca/MARS), a one-stop shop for climate and adaptation information and resources, will also serve as an interactive forum allowing municipal staff responsible for adaptation measure to share information or ask questions of other.
- 3- **Climate Adaptation Training** for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities, hosted by the Clean Air Partnership. The training will focus on different aspects of adaptation and municipal operations, starting at the end of January.
- 4- A **MARS Award** in 2015. Member municipalities will be eligible for the award based on their Call to Action.

The Cities Initiative gratefully acknowledges \$145,000 in funding from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment in support of the MARS program.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.glslcities.org/mars.cfm> .

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (www.glslcities.org) is a binational coalition of 111 mayors and other local officials, representing over 17 million citizens, that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.