



Cities, Ontario Tackle Great Lakes Resiliency to Climate Change Together

Cities Initiative launches Adaptation 'Call to Action'

Embargoed until Friday, January 17, 2014 at 11:15 EST, 10:15pm CST

Windsor, ON January 17, 2014 – Today, at its mid-year meeting hosted by Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis, mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative launched the Municipal Adaptation and Resiliency Service (MARS). The Honourable Teresa Piruzza, MPP for Windsor West, announced \$145,000 in funding from the Government of Ontario to support the program. MARS will help municipalities accelerate local adaptation to climate change in the Great Lakes region.

“I am thrilled to be hosting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative mid- year meeting here in Windsor,” said Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis. “The Windsor-Detroit area is truly at the crossroads of the Great Lakes region, so it is a privilege to have American and Canadian mayors coming together in our city to discuss the most pressing issues facing the region.”

Municipalities of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region are feeling the effects of climate change already, from flooding in Thunder Bay and Duluth and the prolonged drought in the American Midwest in 2012, to historically low water levels in the Great Lakes and rapid erosion of the St. Lawrence. Most recently, an extreme storm hit the Greater Toronto area last summer and caused widespread flooding and damage.

“The City of Thunder Bay experienced extreme rainfall and flooding in 2012, and we learned from the experience. MARS will help all of us be more aware of what to expect from our changing climate, and be better prepared,” said Thunder Bay mayor Keith Hobbs.

MARS is made possible through the support of the Ontario Government. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment’s Great Lakes Strategy includes support for local adaptation in the Great Lakes region.

“Climate change is real, it’s here, and its impacts are being felt in the Great Lakes region, its tributaries and its shoreline. By teaming up with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, the Ontario Government is pleased to support adaptation in the Great Lakes region,” said the Honourable Teresa Piruzza, member of provincial parliament for Windsor West.

As a starting point, members of the Cities Initiative will issue a Call to Action, documenting each municipality’s adaptation measures to be implemented over the next two years.

MARS will then provide support for these activities through a Community of Practice portal hosted by the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources (OCCIAR). The



portal is a one-stop shop for adaptation resources, and also serves as an interactive forum for municipal mayors and staff to share information and ideas on adaptation. A series of training webinars hosted by the Clean Air Partnership (CAP) will focus on measures to start and expand adaptation locally. MARS will also put practical tools in the hands of municipalities to assess their vulnerability to climate change.

“The Call to Action demonstrates local governments’ commitment to adaptation right across the Great Lakes basin,” said Racine Mayor John Dickert, Cities Initiative Secretary-Treasurer, “and the MARS program provides us with the building blocks to get us there.”

Also at the mid-year meeting, mayors discussed important topics for the Great Lakes region, including energy transportation, microplastics in the Great Lakes, and the Deep Geological Repository proposal.

For more information on MARS and the Call to Action, please visit <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.

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