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**MAYORS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION TO KEEP DRINKING WATER SAFE
IN THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE RIVER**

Toledo water crisis a 'wake up call'

Today, at the Mayors Drinking Water Summit, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and fellow Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative mayors from across the region called for immediate action to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River as a source of drinking water for over 40 million people.

"Today, my fellow mayors and I stand united in our call for more, better and faster action to protect Great Lakes and St. Lawrence residents from the kind of threat that recently closed down Toledo's drinking water system," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This situation cannot and will not be tolerated as the new normal."

The summit, hosted by Mayor Emanuel and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, brought together twenty U.S. and Canadian mayors and leading experts in drinking water and environmental protection. Topics of discussion included threats to drinking water, with a particular focus on the causes of the Toledo drinking water shut down. The mayors were joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy, who explained the federal government's response to the threat of microcystin toxins in Lake Erie.

"The microcystin toxin as seen in Toledo's drinking water represents a significant public health threat," said Racine Mayor John Dickert, chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "Mayors will work with federal, state and provincial authorities, agricultural interests, residents and businesses to ensure that everyone is doing their part to eliminate this threat to Great Lakes drinking water."

Following expert presentations and in-depth deliberations, the mayors called for action:

- By USEPA to establish a common limit and an emergency response protocol for microcystin in drinking water for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region;
- By Great Lakes states to establish a phosphorus open lake water quality standard;
- By agriculture to further reduce the runoff from farms into Lake Erie, including better nutrient management and application of the '4R Nutrient Stewardship' program;
- By municipalities to further reduce phosphorus loadings through more green infrastructure, better treatment plant operations, and pollution prevention measures.

"We receive most of our water in the St. Lawrence River from the Great Lakes," said Québec City Mayor and Québec Metropolitan Community President Régis Labeaume, "With shared responsibility for these waters, Canadian cities stand as strong partners in cleaning up Lake Erie and protecting the remaining Great Lakes from all threats to our drinking water."

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (www.glsocities.org) is a binational coalition of 114 mayors and other local officials representing over 17 million people, 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.