



## **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors Request Meeting on Spill Response**

*Letter sent to federal authorities in both Canada and U.S.*

Chicago, June 21, 2010 – At their 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Member Meeting and Conference, hosted by Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) expressed serious concern about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. In a letter sent to the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, mayors have requested an immediate meeting to discuss how federal authorities would respond to a major spill in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

"Our residents depend on the Great Lakes as their main drinking water source and a vital natural resource central to their livelihood. There is a growing concern about the devastating impact a disaster like that in the Gulf can have on the Great Lakes," said Mayor Richard M. Daley, Founding U.S. Chairman of the Cities Initiative. "Federal officials need to give mayors the information we need to assure our residents that the appropriate response plans are in place in case of this type of emergency."

Mayors are seeking confirmation from their respective countries that the federal agencies have adequate resources to respond to a large-scale spill anywhere in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. The Lakes and River are the source of drinking water for millions of Canadians and Americans.

"The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has drawn attention to the fragility of our water resources, the importance of prevention and the difficulty of rapid response," said Mayor Denis Lapointe, Chair of the Cities Initiative. "Communities along the St. Lawrence River are seeking assurances that adequate spill response is in place."

*The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of over 70 mayors and other local officials 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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