



## **Mayors Call on US and Canada to Protect Drinking Water**

Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) are calling on the Governors of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, along with the Premier of Ontario to move forward to get major reductions in Nutrient loadings to Lake Erie. Pointing to the water crisis in Toledo last summer and the ongoing threats to drinking water in cities in Canada and the United States, the Mayors are calling for at least a 40% reduction in nutrient loadings from agriculture, cities, and industry. They point to the need for aggressive, firm, and consistent milestones and deadlines for meeting the load reduction targets.

Because of the importance of protecting citizens against toxic contamination from algal blooms and microcystin, Mayor John Dickert of Racine, Wisconsin, and Chair of the Cities Initiative said, “We have known for years that major reductions are needed, and the International Joint Commission in its Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority Report called for reduced loadings in the range of 40% well over a year ago. It is time to move ahead with the reductions rather than just talking about them.” A consensus seems to be building around that number. Although the Federal governments have the lead role in setting the targets, the States and Province are in the best position to create the programs to get the actual reductions. The Mayors strongly urge the federal governments to complete the process under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to set the targets.

The Mayors also called for action last fall by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to set health advisories on the U.S. side for microcystin, and for Health Canada to update existing guidelines on the Canadian side. Mayor Dickert said, “I am very pleased U.S. EPA came out with its proposed advisory in May and expects to make it final soon. “ Canada is on a slightly slower track, but has guidelines in place already. Mayor Dickert added, “These advisories and guidelines need to be harmonized across the border, protocols for responding to emergencies are essential, and direction on sampling and analytical procedures must be standardized.”

Mayors and their cities are prepared to sit down with agriculture and industry, as well as states, provinces, federal governments, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders to come up with the best way to achieve the reductions.



The Cities Initiative is a coalition of 114 cities from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin with over 17 million population working together to advance the protection, restoration, and long term sustainability of one of the largest freshwater treasures in the world.

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*Mitch Twolan, Mayor of Huron-Kinloss, Vice-Chair*  
*Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montréal, Secretary-Treasurer*