



## **Mayors hold first Great Lakes Day at Queen's Park Mayors press for Provincial Action on Toxic Algae, Asian Carp**

Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Toronto – Today, over twenty local elected officials of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative from across Ontario are meeting with provincial legislators to press for action on issues threatening the Great Lakes and communities that rely on them, with action on toxic algae in Lake Erie and Asian Carp in Lake Ontario topping the priority list. The mayors are delighted to have an audience with her Honour Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell to discuss the health of the Great Lakes.

“The health and economic prosperity of Ontarians relies on the Great Lakes. When they are threatened, we are threatened. As stewards of the largest body of fresh water on Earth, we must remain vigilant, and that takes both political commitment and resources from all levels of government,” said Huron-Kinloss Mayor Mitch Twolan, chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

The mayors will highlight the urgent need for action on the growth of toxic algae in Lake Erie and elsewhere in the basin. In 2014, the City of Toledo was forced to shut down its drinking water system due to the presence of microcystin, a neurotoxin released by cyanobacteria found in some algal blooms. The same bacteria has threatened drinking water systems serving Pelee Island.

“Premier Wynne showed leadership in signing an agreement with Ohio and Michigan to reduce phosphorus by 40% by 2025 in Lake Erie. That political commitment must now be translated into funding and concrete action on the ground to realize this goal, said Chatham-Kent Mayor Randy Hope, a Cities Initiative board member, “The Cities Initiative is willing and able to find solutions collaboratively with farming interests, cottagers, municipalities and government in the Thames River basin.”

This summer, a number of Asian Carp, an invasive species that poses a significant threaten to the \$450 million commercial and recreational fisheries of Ontario, were found off the shores of Toronto in Lake Ontario, raising the alarm that they have been able to cross over the barrier at the Mississippi River and penetrate the Great Lakes.

“Cooperation in protecting the Great Lakes is one of the great success stories in Canada-US relations, but controlling Asian Carp may be our greatest challenges yet, said Niagara Falls (NY) Mayor Paul Dyster, a Cities Initiative board member, “Joint action by the US and Canada, the Great Lakes states and Ontario must be stepped up and sped up significantly to meet this serious threat to our fisheries and the Great Lakes ecosystem.”

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*Mitch Twolan, Mayor of Huron-Kinloss, Chair*

*Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montréal, Vice-Chair*

*Paul Dyster, Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York, Secretary-Treasurer*



Other issues to be discussed with ministers and opposition members include banning microplastics, supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation in cities, wetlands conservation, and the eradication of destructive invasive plants like phragmites.

The Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of over 115 mayors, collectively representing over 17 million people, who work together to protect, restore and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin.

**\*A backgrounder can be found at <http://glslcities.org/news/press-release-archives/>**

**Media Availability:**

Attendees will be available to the media between 9am and 11am Eastern time. Please contact Simon Belisle at [simon.belisle@gslscities.org](mailto:simon.belisle@gslscities.org) or 773-512-3788 for further information.

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