



November 2, 2007

The Honourable Jim Watson  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Watson,

On behalf of the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs. As you chart out plans for your ministry over the next four years, we urge you to treat action on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence as a high priority.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national association of mayors of 49 cities in 10 states and provinces, including Kingston, that are located in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin. The mayors share a commitment and passion for protecting the health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem, the source of drinking water, economic vitality, and recreational activity for over 40 million people.

The Cities Initiative applauds your government's commitment to the Great Lakes with its leadership on the Great Lakes Charter Annex, the 2007 Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, and the *Clean Water Act*. We urge you to continue to build on these successes.

In particular, the Cities Initiative is asking the Ontario Government to involve local governments as full partners on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence matters, and secure municipalities a seat at the table for the renegotiation and implementation of COA 2010, and other provincial decisions related to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. It is imperative that cities are included in government to government discussions, rather than as one of a number of stakeholders. We bring significant investment and decision making authority to the table. It is time that we work in a coordinated fashion with the Provincial and Federal Governments to protect the Great Lakes.

Likewise, it is important that the Ministries of Environment, Public Infrastructure Renewal, and Municipal Affairs work with Great Lakes municipalities to determine infrastructure funding priorities that would directly benefit the Great Lakes, such as sewage treatment upgrades, the separation of combined sewers and management of stormwater runoff, and the replacement of leaking water distribution systems.

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*Gary Becker, Mayor of Racine, Chair*

*David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair*

*Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, Founding Chair*



Given the ecological and economic importance of the Great Lakes region to the municipalities and the Province of Ontario, we know we share a common goal to protect this invaluable resource. The Cities Initiative would welcome a meeting at your convenience to discuss ways that we may strengthen provincial –municipal relations to support each other in reaching this common goal.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this request of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to continue the Government's strong support for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence in its second mandate.

Sincerely,

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines  
Ontario Regional Director, Great Lake and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Lynn Peterson, Mayor of the City of Thunder Bay, and  
Vice Chair, Great Lake and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

David Miller, Mayor of the City of Toronto, and  
Founding Canadian Chair, Great Lake and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

cc. Hon. John Gerretsen, Minister of the Environment  
Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal  
John Burke, Deputy Minister

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