



Making Waves

November 2nd, 2015

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Feature Story: Queen's Park Day

On Tuesday October 6th , 2015, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative held its first Great Lakes Legislative Day at Queen's Park in Toronto, Ontario. It was a busy day for the 25 local elected officials, who met with four cabinet ministers, two opposition parties, and the Lieutenant Governor. The day ended with a reception co-hosted by Ontario Minister of Finance Charles Sousa and the Cities Initiative.

The day began with a meeting with a dozen members of Progressive Conservative caucus over breakfast. Many thanks to PC caucus chair Lisa Thompson and her staff for organizing the breakfast.

A handful of mayors then joined Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Bill Mauro to discuss Asian Carp, phragmites, and nutrients entering the Great Lakes. The minister took a keen interest in pathways for Asian Carp to enter the lakes from the Chicago area. Cities Initiative members then attended Question Period where they were acknowledged and warmly welcomed by

Minister Mauro and a number of other MPPs.

The mayors then made their way to a meeting with Ontario Minister of Finance Charles Sousa. Minister Sousa, a shoreline member of parliament representing Mississauga South, participated actively in a wide ranging discussion on topics including climate change mitigation and cap and trade, Asian Carp, and



Minister of Finance Charles Sousa meets with Cities Initiative mayors

nutrients entering the Great Lakes. The mayors were then graciously welcomed to the Lieutenant Governor offices in the main legislative building. Her Honour, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, gave the mayors a tour of her art exhibit, 'Identity: Art Inspired by the Great Lakes'. Her Honour spoke eloquently of the importance of forging a common identity for Ontarians, and how the Great Lakes unite us all.

The mayors then joined members of the New Democratic Party of Ontario for a discussion on the Great Lakes. Again, phosphorus loads, Asian Carp and Phragmites were part of the topics covered. Mayors also shared their concerns with the caucus members about climate change adaptation, wetlands and microbeads. A smaller group of mayors joined Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Jeff Leal, for a discussion on phosphorus loadings entering the Great Lakes. The Minister emphasized the good work that the agricultural community has already done through environmental farm plans and the adoption of best practices. The issue of the spread of phragmites that interfere with crops was also discussed.

A final meeting of the day was held with Environment and Climate Change Minister Glen Murray. The Minister emphasized the importance of climate change to the Great Lakes. He expressed an interest in gathering local data on the Great Lakes. The day was rounded out with a reception co-



Minister Murray with Cities Initiative representatives

hosted by Minister Sousa and the Cities Initiative. Cities Initiative Chair Mitch Twolan welcomed MPPs, mayors and special invited guests, including a

number of Great Lakes funders from Canada and the United States. The mayors were delighted to have the recently appointed US Consul General Juan Alsace join them. Consul General Alsace spoke briefly about his fondness for the Great Lakes, having grown up in Buffalo. Ministers Sousa and Murray also brought greetings from the Ontario Government.

Overall the day was a great success for the Cities Initiative. It raised the profile of the organization amongst legislators of all stripes and gave the mayors an opportunity to discuss pressing issues affecting the health of the Great lakes first hand with key decision makers. It was also a social media success. Tweets about our Queen's Park Day were retweeted by mayors and ministers alike. The Cities Initiative would like to express its sincere gratitude to Minister Charles Sousa and his staff for helping to organize the day and reception. It would also like to thank the many member mayors and other elected officials who participated in the day. For those who participated in the day, we would welcome your comments on what worked well and what could be improved for our next Great Lakes Day at Queen's Park. Please send your comments to Laura Brethem at laura.brethem@glslcities.org. To see the gallery of photos, media articles and materials presented to ministers from Great Lakes Day at Queen's Park, please visit our website at www.glslcities.org/legislative-days.

Mississauga revitalizes lakefront

Mississauga can look forward to some big, green changes over the next few years; Councillor Jim Tovey is spearheading a project to restore the waterfront in the Lakeview area of Mississauga to its natural wetlands. This is the first project in the Region of Peel to entirely rebuild a wetland area. The site was formerly home to a coal-fired powerplant and has been vacant since the plant was decommissioned. Councillor Tovey, along with Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie and Mississauga South MPP and Minister of Finance Charles Sousa look forward to what will be a vibrant waterfront park that will allow residents access to the shoreline through trails and green infrastructure. [Read more about the project here.](#)



Rails to Trails in Sheboygan, Wisconsin

The City of Sheboygan, Wisconsin continues to improve the "Shoreland 400," their rails-to-trails initiative. This trail runs through the heart of Sheboygan, and over 30% of Sheboygan County residents live within 1 mile of the trail. It provides bicycle and walking paths through natural areas and a healthy commuter option. The trail follows the path of a former Union Pacific Railroad track that ran from Chicago to Minneapolis and allows access to the downtown area of Sheboygan.

Montreal establishes 100 electric vehicle charging stations

The government of Quebec and the City of Montreal recently announced the installation of one hundred recharge stations for battery-driven vehicles in the downtown area, starting this fall. This announcement represents the first phase of Montreal's electrical transportation strategy.

"We are announcing the installation of 53 recharge stations directly on the streets of the city center...Our objective is to install 1000 recharge locations throughout the city before 2020. Montreal will become the first metropolis in Canada endowed with a network of such magnitude," declared Mayor Denis Coderre.

The City of Montreal aims to reduce 30% of its greenhouse gas emissions before 2020. Achieving this target involves significant changes in the transportation sector, which makes up 43% of greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec.

Phragmites spreads to the media

Newspapers, magazines, and online publications continue to publish articles concerning the non-native plant *Phragmites*. The following articles highlight the need for public education and the rate and ease with which *Phragmites* takes root among native plant species. Many Cities Initiative communities are highly



engaged with this issue and are making strides to eradicate invasive Phragmites.

[Chatham Daily News \(Ontario\)](#)

[Morel Magazine \(Ontario\)](#)

[St. Thomas Journal \(Ontario\)](#)

Around the Region

["Be a Hero, Release Zero:" Illinois/Indiana Sea Grant's new invasive species program](#)

[Michigan lawmakers take on Asian Carp \(Detroit News\)](#)

[First saltie with onboard ballast treatment destined for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence \(Duluth News Tribune\)](#)

[The Great Lakes Region as a blue economy - from the rust belt to the blue belt \(Detroit Free Press\)](#)

Events and Webinars

Winter Operations and Maintenance for Green Infrastructure: US EPA will host a webinar on maintaining green infrastructure in cold climates through the winter months.	November 3rd, 1-2:30 pm EST. Click here to register.
Watercraft Inspection Webinar Series: New York Sea Grant is hosting a series of webinars on watercraft inspection.	November 4th, 12th, and 20th. All webinars will occur from 9:00-10:30 EST. Click here to read descriptions of each webinar and to register.
State of Lake Huron Meeting: Livestream and in-person options. Organized by the Lake Huron Partnership.	November 4th and 5th, 8:30am-5pm Eastern. No need to pre-register - use the link below on the day of the meeting. Click here to join meeting Phone option: +1 (872) 240-3212 Access Code: 378-531-805

Innovations in Stormwater

Management: The North Central Region Water Network will host a webinar on innovative stormwater management techniques featuring presentations from Eleanor Burkett and Shahram Missaghi, both Extension Educators with the University of Minnesota.

November 18th, 3-4pm EST.

[Click here to register.](#)

Membership

Please join the 117 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative members in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River by clicking [here](#) for a membership application. If you are already a member, please encourage your neighboring communities to join, and be sure to renew your membership when you receive your notice.

If your municipality would like to share news with the Cities Initiative, please email information to Laura Bretheim at laura.bretheim@glslcities.org

