

Creating a Common Vision and Blueprint for a *Prosperous and Sustainable* Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE FAST FACTS

- Home to 107 million people who live in over 15,000 cities and towns.
- Contains 20% of the Earth's surface fresh water.
- Third largest regional economy in the world, valued at \$C 7.6 trillion.
- Provides drinking water to over 40 million U.S. and Canadian residents.
- Supports the \$C 8.3 billion fisheries industry.
- Under threat from chemicals of concern, agricultural and urban phosphorus run-off, climate change, micro-plastics, and invasive species, including sea lamprey, Asian Carp, and phragmites.



WHO WE ARE

A diverse group of stakeholders from business, non-governmental organizations, municipalities, and fisheries managers have come together to galvanize action to protect and promote the environment and economy of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin. Although we may hold different views on specific issues, we are united in the belief that the long-term growth and competitiveness of the regional economy is intricately linked to our success in cleaning up and protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The group includes:

- Council of the Great Lakes Region
- Freshwater Future
- World Wildlife Fund
- Strategies Saint Laurent
- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Great Lakes St Lawrence Cities Initiative
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Environmental Defence Canada
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Regroupement des organismes de bassins versants de Québec

A VISION AND BLUEPRINT FOR THE REGION

We request that the Government of Canada join with us and other stakeholders in a collaborative initiative to develop a common vision and blueprint for action to ensure the vitality and competitiveness of the region's economy and the long-term health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem.

This proposed collaborative initiative is inspired by the success of a similar exercise on the U.S. side of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin, initiated in 2004 by a presidential Executive order (E.O.# 13340), and that resulted in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which has delivered over \$2 billion in funding since 2010 to program areas developed collaboratively under the process. In addition to significant federal funding, the GLRI has boosted collaboration and stakeholder capacity throughout the Great Lakes basin on the U.S. side.



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We request that the Government of Canada work with Indigenous, provincial and municipal governments, key business and NGO interests to establish a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Taskforce that would convene and establish a process for collaboration with a mandate to :

- Reach a common vision for the protection and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence environment and economy.
- Undertake a strategic examination of federal, provincial and local policies, programs and budgets to determine how they may more effectively protect and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence environment and economy.
- Engage with U.S. and state governments, businesses and NGOs, as well as bi-national bodies like the International Joint Commission, that are involved in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region regarding policies, strategies, projects, and priorities relating to the protection and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence environment and economy.
- Coordinate a framework of consistent policies, strategies, projects, and priorities for addressing the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes system and assisting in the appropriate management of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River.
- Initiate its work in January 2017 and complete the vision and blueprint by the summer of 2018. This would be followed by discussions on financing the plan by all levels of government.
- This initiative is in no way meant to negatively impact ongoing programs under the Canada-Ontario Agreement and the St. Lawrence Action Plan. On the contrary, this approach is intended to reinforce political, scientific and financial support for existing programs and ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.



MP CAUCUS

We urge parliamentarians to form a multi-party Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Caucus to strengthen support in Government for action to protect and promote the Region's environment and economy. For more information on the formation of this Caucus, please contact: Eamonn Horan-Lunney in the office of Vance Badawey, MP Niagara Centre at: vance.badawey.A1@parl.gc.ca.