



**GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE**
CITIES INITIATIVE

MRCTI

Mississippi River Cities and
Towns Initiative



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

150 U.S. Mayors urge Congressional leaders to find compromise on stimulus spending to help struggling cities and towns

CHICAGO, September 23, 2020 -- 150 mayors are urging Congressional leaders to reach a compromise on a new COVID-19 package to provide urgently needed financial relief to cities and towns that have borne the brunt of the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The mayors conveyed a simple message: “pass a COVID relief package that provides meaningful support for communities struggling through this extraordinary time of fiscal distress.” They emphasized that their constituents expect Congress to “set aside partisan political considerations and help our cities maintain essential public services, keep workers on the job, and continue investments in roads, water systems and other critical infrastructure.”

The mayors represent small towns and large cities across the political spectrum stretching from the East Coast across the industrial Midwest down to the mouth of the Mississippi River on the Gulf of Mexico, and are members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative or the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative. These cities are on the front lines confronting the pandemic and suffering from the damage it has caused local economies and the revenue shortfalls that threaten the ability to maintain vital services for constituents.

The mayors noted signs of compromise and bipartisan support in Congress for a new COVID relief package, as well as strong public support, with 86 percent of Americans supporting federal relief for cities, towns, and villages.

Local governments are projected to experience budget shortfalls of over \$360 billion in the coming three years. The Great Lakes and Mississippi River states are among the hardest hit, with local governments projecting revenue losses up to 80%. As a result, nearly one-third of cities report plans to furlough or lay off employees, compounding the 1.5 million public sector jobs lost since March.

And nearly two-thirds of cities may delay or cancel capital expenditures and infrastructure projects, which will further stifle job growth and slow local recovery. Unfortunately, nearly 70% of cities have not received funding through the CARES Act, underscoring the need for Congress to provide direct aid to local governments.

The mayors emphasized that the nation's economic recovery is jeopardized by ongoing economic damage to local communities, and that without federal assistance, struggling local economies in will be a significant obstacle to long-term stabilization and economic recovery.

Compounding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many cities have also been hit by overlapping crises, including hurricanes, powerful convective storms and tornadoes.

The complete letter to Congressional leaders is available online [here](#).

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About the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative ([MRCTI](#)) is a coalition of 100 mayors from across the Mississippi River Corridor which spans along ten states from Minnesota to Louisiana. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 40 percent of the nation's agricultural commodity output moves on the Mississippi River. The River's resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.

About The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#) is a binational coalition of close to 100 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The Cities Initiative and local officials integrate environmental, economic and social agendas and sustain a resource that represents approximately 80 percent of North America's surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for 40 million people and is the foundation upon which a strong regional economy is based.

For More Information Contact:

MRCTI, Jim Gwinner, jgwinner@LS2group.com

GLSCI, John Vita, john.vita@jsvcom.com