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CITIES INITIATIVE

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative supports new Canadian stimulus program but asks that water restoration funding be included

OTTAWA, 8 October, 2020 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative supports the recently announced \$10 billion Canadian government infrastructure stimulus program but asks that water restoration stimulus funding also be included.

“The \$10 billion investment into Canadian communities will help rebuild the post COVID-19 world,” said Walter Sendzik, Vice Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “But with water levels rising and increasing storm damage to businesses and homes every year, dedicated funding to address Great Lakes and St. Lawrence core water infrastructure issues is needed now more than ever.”

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River represents 80 percent of North America’s supply of fresh surface water and are the drinking water source for 40 million people. With nearly one-third of U.S. and Canadian economic activity centered in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, accelerating its recovery will fuel the larger, national economic recovery.

Investing in water infrastructure is one of the most cost-effective ways to stimulate economic activity. Every job added in the water and wastewater industry is projected to create an additional 3.68 jobs in the national economy, and every million dollars in federal funding will generate \$2.95 million in economic activity.

Research shows water restoration projects are the number one creators of jobs among public infrastructure projects. A \$7 billion investment into core water infrastructure including flooding and erosion mitigation would create over 150,000 jobs over the next two construction seasons.

Maintaining water infrastructure is critical for the health of local communities and regional economies. For example, more than nine million jobs across the binational Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, generating \$447 billion in annual wages, are in sectors that depend on clean water infrastructure and services.