



# Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Convenes Mayors Water Equity Commission

CHICAGO, IL -- November 16, 2020 -- Eleven mayors from major Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities are coming together to address water equity challenges as part of a new Mayors Water Equity Commission.

## **Members of the Commission:**

- Mayor Sam Cunningham, Waukegan, IL (Commission Chair)
- Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Chicago, IL
- Mayor Mike Duggan, Detroit, MI
- Mayor Gino Moretti of Saint-Anicet, Quebec
- Mayor Jerome Prince, Gary, IN
- Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee, WI
- Mayor Valerie Plante, Montreal, QC
- Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, Toledo, OH
- Mayor Billy McKinney – Zion, IL

“Many residents throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region lack access to clean and affordable drinking water,” said Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham, Chair of the new Water Equity Commission. “While water equity challenges are particularly severe for poor communities and communities of color, they are relevant for all citizens.”

The Commission will convene in December to address a range of water equity issues, including access, affordability, community and economic benefits from water infrastructure investments, and community resilience to climate change.

In early 2021 the Commission will conduct stakeholder listening sessions and policy briefings, and explore collaborative partnerships. The Commission will then present to the entire Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative membership at the annual meeting in May, outlining issues and proposed solutions to water equity challenges.

“As a water-centric city, Milwaukee is structuring water equity through creating an inclusive workforce in water-focused careers,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “Advancing equity in our water workforce will ensure economic, environmental and social benefits that will result in enhanced water stewardship.”

“As I've said since day one as Mayor, water is a fundamental human right. Unfortunately, many communities have faced challenges in accessing safe, clean and affordable water,” said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “It is my hope that this group of Mayors can help in changing that.”

“Considering our dependency on clean water, it is time that we work together to alleviate the inequities that too many of our residents face in accessing safe and affordable water,” said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan.

“We look forward to working with these Mayors as we address these critical water equity issues,” said Sheboygan, Wisconsin Mayor Mike Vandersteen, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

### **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.

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