



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE**  
CITIES INITIATIVE  
**L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES**  
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

**MRCCTI**

Mississippi River Cities and  
Towns Initiative



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# 150 mayors from across America's heartland urge funding to support COVID-19 response

*Urgent financial relief needed for cities and towns that have borne the brunt of the pandemic*

CHICAGO, December 15, 2020 -- 150 mayors from across America's heartland are asking House and Senate leaders to pass a new COVID-19 package that includes urgently needed financial relief for cities and towns that have borne the brunt of the impact from the pandemic. With infections, hospitalizations, and deaths at unprecedented levels, and economic recovery stalling, citizens are looking for immediate action from Washington.

"We need to avoid further delays and approve a new relief package before adjourning the current Congress," said Mayor Mike Vandersteen, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "Regardless of how it is structured, it is imperative that Congress approve revenue replacement for local governments to ensure the swiftest possible recovery from the pandemic."

"Our two associations 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 at the Gulf of Mexico," said Kyle Moore, Mayor of Quincy, IL and member of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative. "The pandemic is reaching critical levels now as contagion sweeps through our states unabated. It is imperative we have resources available through the stimulus package to effectively maintain city services and deploy the pending vaccines."

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River states are among the hardest hit. These cities reflect the national impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, where on average cities have seen revenues decline

by more than 20 percent while expenditures have increased by 17 percent. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of cities surveyed did not receive CARES Act funding. More than 70 percent of cities expect their condition to worsen if Congress does not pass a new COVID relief package.

Cities are experiencing unprecedented financial instability and an escalating pandemic that is straining their ability to maintain basic public services, safeguard public health, and prepare for the upcoming distribution of the COVID vaccine.

As a result, an immediate and unified federal response is needed to support state and local efforts to contain the virus and mitigate the economic consequences of this unprecedented crisis.

Without federal financial assistance, our nation's economic recovery will stall and cities and towns—both urban and rural—will be further challenged in rebuilding healthy local economies. Federal aid will also enable our cities to sustain joint response efforts from the public and private sector, and support partnerships between local governments, businesses and their communities to mitigate the economic, health and public safety impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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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.

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