



## **2021 Federal Priorities for the U.S. and Canada And Outreach Plan**

*February 2021*

### **Overview**

The Cities Initiative is preparing priorities to present to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments that identify funding, policies and programs that are important for the environmental and economic health of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities. The specific U.S. and Canadian priorities and funding requests are presented in the attached documents. A cover letter on Cities Initiative letterhead will accompany each document to provide background on the organization and to put the priorities in the context of our mission and role. This update summarizes those priorities and outlines the outreach plan for promoting them to the two federal governments and other stakeholders.

The rollout of the COVID vaccine, the start of the Biden Administration in Washington, and an expected federal election in Canada present important opportunities for the Cities Initiative to advance its priorities with both federal governments. This is reinforced by the focus both governments are putting on the environment and climate change.

### **U.S. Federal Priorities**

The U.S. federal priorities will be organized in the following categories:

- Provide Emergency Financial Relief to Great Lakes Cities to Sustain Vital Public Services
- Safeguard Drinking Water and Advance Equity in Water Services
- Pass an Infrastructure Package to Modernize Water Systems
- Sustain Great Lakes Restoration and Revitalization
- Help Great Lakes Cities Strengthen Coastal Resilience and Respond to Impacts from Climate Change
- Protect the Great Lakes from Asian Carp and other Destructive Invasive Species
- Strengthen the Great Lakes Navigation System

In addition, the Cities Initiative plans to join other U.S. regional agencies and organizations in a joint statement of common priorities for the Great Lakes. This statement presents a powerful single voice that demonstrates broad-based support for the priorities. The Cities Initiative has joined this statement in past years; the 2020 statement is online [here](#).

### **Canadian Federal Priorities**

The Canadian federal priorities will be organized in the following categories:

- Create a Canada Water Agency
- Protect Great Lake and St. Lawrence River Shoreline Communities
- Reduce Exposure to Toxins
- Emerging Toxins
- Nutrient Reduction and Addressing Algae Blooms
- Make Beaches Clean and Safe
- Invasive Species
- Strengthen Commercial Navigation on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River
- COVID Economic Stimulus: \$7 billion Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Shoreline Water Infrastructure

## **Outreach Plan**

### February

- Release Cities Initiative U.S. and Canadian federal priorities (media release, social media, etc.)
- Joint meeting with Parliament Great Lakes St. Lawrence Taskforce to discuss Budget 2021 priorities
  - o In Canada, Cities Initiative members will be encouraged to participate in Budget 2021 consultations with their local MP and share our priorities.
- Launch “what the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River mean to me” video
  - o Ask Cities Initiative members to film a short video of what the shoreline/water means to them and their community.
  - o Have Cities Initiative members engage their local MP or Congressional representative to also film a short video of what the shoreline/water means to them and their community.

### March

- Great Lakes Day in Washington – U.S. mayors to engage with their Members of Congress and administration officials to promote our U.S. priorities.
  - o U.S. and Canadian taskforces to hold joint meeting.
- Mid Year Meeting –
  - o Our Board to meet with Canadian and American elected officials (MPs, Congress, Senators)
  - o Position our priorities for two events in April 2021:
    - Possible Canada election kickoff (meet with all parties)
    - U.S. Climate summit (meet with key government officials)

### April

- In both countries highlight the risk from seasonal flooding
  - o COVID infrastructure / coastline infrastructure funding
- CANADA - have member present Cities Initiative “Election Ask 2021” to MPs
- USA - leading up to Biden Environmental Summit – Engage with Senate/Congress on core asks

### May

- In both countries highlight the risk from seasonal flooding
  - o COVID infrastructure / coastline infrastructure funding

### June

- Additional outreach activities to be developed based on circumstances and response to previous efforts.