



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

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative applauds passage of Biden COVID relief package

CHICAGO, March 10, 2021 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative applauds the passage of the Biden Administration’s COVID relief package that will provide critical assistance to struggling towns, villages and cities.

“We congratulate the Biden Administration on the passage of this critical relief bill,” said Mayor Mike Vandersteen, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “This funding comes not a moment too soon, as our cities have been front and center in fighting COVID-19 and have seen firsthand damage to their local economies and revenue shortfalls threatening vital services.”

The Biden COVID package includes \$350 billion in direct aid to state, local, and territorial governments that will help fund frontline workers, public transit agencies and pandemic response. An additional \$500 million is targeted for the new Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program to help families struggling to pay water and sewer bills.

“We are now looking forward to the Biden Administration’s infrastructure proposals that will further our recovery,” said Vandersteen. “Over 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.”

The eight Great Lakes states have an estimated need for nearly \$200 billion over the next 20 years to maintain and upgrade drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure – nearly 30% of the national need. Maintaining water infrastructure is critical for the health of local communities and our regional economy.

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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