



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Supports Commitments in Speech from the Throne

St. Catharines, ON, 24 November 2021 – St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, responded to priorities outlined by the Government of Canada in the Speech from the Throne.

“Given the ongoing challenges cities and communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin are facing because of our changing climate, we need urgent action from the federal government to help municipalities prepare for a higher incidence of extreme weather. We therefore welcome the government’s ongoing commitment to develop Canada’s first-ever National Adaptation Strategy as referenced in today’s Speech from the Throne.

The Cities Initiative is currently working with municipal, regional and non-governmental partners on a Coastal Resilience Strategy. A preliminary survey of 241 cities, villages and other jurisdictions along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, released earlier this year as part of our strategy, showed that coastal damage from climate change will cost at least \$2.46 billion over the next five years, with shoreline communities having already spent \$1.1 billion over the past two years. These figures only represent a fraction of the region’s true need as not all shoreline jurisdictions are reflected in that assessment. Moreover, costs will only increase with time should communities in the region not receive the funding needed to take necessary action to safeguard their infrastructure and shorelines.

The Cities Initiative was also pleased to see the government once again make a commitment in the Throne Speech to creating the Canada Water Agency. We look forward to seeing further announcements about the Agency and the government's plans to address climate change and support communities along the shores of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin through this newly-created body.

Finally, we encourage the federal government to continue working with the Cities Initiative and other Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River stakeholders to address issues specific to the region's watershed, which supports nearly half of Canada's population. Only by working together can we safeguard our precious freshwater resource and the foundation for sustainable prosperity it provides for future generations.

As we welcome back MPs and Senators for this 44th Parliament, we urge the government and all parties to move swiftly to address Canada's growing climate change adaptation and freshwater management issues. We also encourage Ontario and Quebec members in particular to become more familiar with the situation of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and to push for targeted action to support this highly critical region."

About The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of over 135 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 to sustain a resource that represents approximately 80% 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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