



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Cities Initiative joins calls on the Canadian Government to restore funding for shoreline infrastructure along the St. Lawrence Seaway

There is an increasingly urgent need to reinstate the now defunct Shoreline Protection Program to effectively protect impacted communities

Montreal, QC March 24, 2022 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is joining concerned communities in calling on the Government of Canada to take a proactive approach and restore funding for shoreline protection infrastructure along the St. Lawrence Seaway. Bringing back a modernized shoreline infrastructure program would help address erosion along the shores of affected communities, while contributing to protecting water quality and supporting job creation at a critical moment of Quebec's economic recovery.

The now defunct shoreline protection program was run by the federal government during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway and who maintained these works, but was regrettably terminated in 1997. Since then, the shores of the St. Lawrence River, particularly between Montreal and Lake Saint-Pierre, have experienced significant erosion, creating problems for municipalities, landowners and public safety.

"The shoreline protection program for communities along the St. Lawrence Seaway is of great importance and it is therefore crucial to address the increasing erosion issues along this active waterway. The consequences of inaction are serious, including considerable loss of wildlife, plant habitat and land," said Mayor of Contrecoeur, Maud Allaire. "We need to encourage further research on the impacts of climate change on our municipal shorelines, as well as invest in infrastructure renewal to maintain their integrity. I am pleased to see the Cities Initiative support these efforts in protecting our shorelines for future generations."

Growing Political Support

Given the escalating gravity of the situation, an increasing number of political figures are adding their voices to calls on the federal government to act. Mayors along the busy navigation corridor have been doing their part to advocate for restoration of funding to renew infrastructure and help address serious erosion issues.

At the federal level, two Bloc Québécois Members of Parliament representing impacted ridings are spearheading the call to restore funding. A renewed mobilization effort is currently taking

place in Ottawa in the form of a petition led by Berthier—Maskinongé MP, Yves Perron, after his first one fell through due to the fall 2021 election. This follows a similar petition promoted by Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères MP, Xavier Barsalou-Duval, in February 2020. The federal government [responded](#) that it continues to support initiatives aimed at preventing shoreline erosion, but did not commit to restoring the expired infrastructure program.

A Responsible Way Forward

As the St. Lawrence Seaway justifiably becomes an increasingly important corridor for shipping and help drive economic development across Quebec and Ontario, especially in the context of the post-pandemic recovery, so grows the importance of protecting shoreline properties and communities along this busy navigation corridor.

The calls from Quebec municipalities to restore funding for shoreline communities aligns closely with the Cities Initiative's focus on coastal resiliency as a key pillar of its work. Last year, the Cities Initiative created a Mayors' Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience to hear from experts and impacted communities and develop recommendations to encourage a responsible way forward for addressing shoreline erosion and flooding. The Advisory Council's Canadian recommendations focus on boosting action and collaboration around coastal resilience from the federal government. They also call for more resources to support nature-based and green infrastructure.

"The Cities Initiative is proud to support calls from our members and other affected municipalities for the Government of Canada to restore funding for shoreline protection infrastructure along the St. Lawrence Seaway." said Gino Moretti, Mayor of the Municipality of Saint-Anicet and member of the Cities Initiative's Executive Committee. "The federal government helped protect our communities and their residents through this legacy program while creating an essential shipping corridor that crosses Quebec into the Great Lakes. Restoring funding to protect our shores is the right thing to do and an important first step in addressing erosion issues across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin."

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of U.S. and Canadian mayors from more than 125 cities and municipalities 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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