



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario and Quebec mayors call for greater federal leadership to protect shoreline communities along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative renews calls for more than \$1 billion in federal investments to help municipalities in the region fight shoreline erosion and flooding.

Collingwood, ON March 8, 2022 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is calling on the Government of Canada to step up its actions to address coastal erosion and flooding issues along the shores of the region’s waterways. In particular, the Cities Initiative is renewing its call for the federal government to invest at least \$1 billion in the creation of a Joint Office of Shoreline Climate Adaptation and Resilience and support long-term planning along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, in partnership with the Ontario and Quebec governments.

For the past year, 20 members of the Cities Initiative have met as a Mayors’ Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience to hear from experts and impacted communities to develop recommendations with the aim of encouraging progress on an issue that is anticipated to cost billions of dollars in damage and put communities and properties at risk.

“The message from experts and mayors alike is clear: climate change is here and hitting our coastal communities hard,” says Brian Saunderson, Mayor of the Town of Collingwood and Canadian Co-Chair of the Cities Initiative Mayors’ Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience. “We need action from all levels of government to better support planning and spur investments in long-term, environmentally-friendly solutions to protect our shorelines and waterfronts. The federal government needs to make this issue a top priority and work with the Ontario and Quebec governments to safeguard property and water quality.”

The Advisory Council’s Canadian recommendations focus on boosting action from the federal government with a request for more resources to improve cities’ and regions’ ability to plan for the future and support the uptake of nature-based and green solutions. This year, the Advisory Council will focus on best practices for engaging private landowners around these challenges and better understanding persistent funding issues for Canadian communities to address flooding, erosion and storm damage along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

About the Cities Initiative Mayors' Advisory Council

Launched in February 2021, the Cities Initiative Mayors' Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience is made of up of 20 mayors and local elected officials from Ontario, Quebec and the US Great Lakes states, supported by an additional 20 stakeholders, government officials, academic, and industry leaders. Over the past year, the Advisory Council met on a monthly basis to hear from experts and impacted communities with the goal of developing binational, US-focused and Canadian-focused recommendations. A final report with the full recommendations will be released later this month.

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.

Additional facts:

- The recommendation around the creation of the Joint Office of Shoreline Climate Adaptation and Resilience was initially presented to the federal government as part of recommendations in the [Action 2020-2030 to Protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence](#), a 10-year, \$2.2-billion strategy to protect the economy and ecology developed by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative, of which the Cities Initiative is a partner.
- The Cities Initiative recently submitted its [federal priorities](#) as part of the Government of Canada's pre-budget consultation, which included the Mayors' Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience recommendations.
- Last year, the Cities Initiative [released results](#) from its first coastal needs assessment survey which found that respondents in Ontario, Quebec and the eight Great Lakes States in the U.S. spent \$878 million USD over the previous two years to respond to coastal challenges and will spend nearly \$2 billion over the next five years to combat damage to the region's shorelines. The Cities Initiative will conduct another survey this year and share results later this year.

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