



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE

L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

Wisconsin communities to spend nearly \$245 million over next five years combating coastal damages from climate change

- *Survey respondents reported spending \$86 million USD over past two years to respond to coastal challenges;*
- *Mayors urgently call on Congress to include needed funds in the upcoming infrastructure package.*

CHICAGO, July 16, 2021 – A survey of 48 Wisconsin cities, villages and other jurisdictions along the Great Lakes shows that coastal damage from climate change will cost at least \$245 million over the next five years, with shoreline communities having already spent \$86 million over the past two years. These figures only represent a fraction of the true need as not all shoreline jurisdictions are reflected in this figure.

This new information illustrates the scope and magnitude of climate impacts on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and the need for increased federal assistance for coastal communities struggling to respond to threats to critical infrastructure and assets along their shorelines. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, along with other regional organizations, are calling for funding in an upcoming infrastructure package to enable Great Lakes states and local governments to prepare for, respond to, and build resilience to current and future impacts from high lake levels and severe weather events.

The eight Great Lakes states have over 4,500 miles of shoreline, nearly as much as all the states bordering on the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and west coasts combined. A substantial, targeted investment in coastal resilience in the Great Lakes is warranted and will generate substantial benefits for the environmental and economic health of shoreline communities in the region.

Key Wisconsin survey findings

- Shore erosion, flooding, storm severity, and infrastructure damage rank among the highest priority coastal issues in Wisconsin. The average costs associated with these issues were:
 - ~\$3,450,000 for shore erosion issues
 - ~\$5,200,000 for flooding issues
 - ~\$5,200,000 for storm severity issues
 - ~\$22,300,000 for infrastructure damage
- The highest percentage of funds will be used toward port/Mariana damages totaling ~\$52,400,000 followed by water infrastructure at ~\$42,700,000 and natural coastal features at \$35,200,000.
- They have generally made the most progress in comprehensive planning updates, with 24% of the population reporting that action has been completed in this area. This is followed by 18% of the population completing action regarding jurisdiction vulnerability assessments.

The Coastal Resilience Needs Assessment Survey was completed in partnership with the University of Illinois Applied Research Institute and collected information from March through May 2021. The survey received nearly 300 responses from 241 jurisdictions across all eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces that border the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

About The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of over 120 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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