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Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Mayors Play a Key Role in Freshwater Summit in Ottawa

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative actively participated in an event that showcased the binational importance of a shared resource that provides drinking water for 40 million Canadians and Americans

OTTAWA, ON February 14, 2023 – A delegation of local government leaders who are members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) participated in the Summit on Fresh Water in Ottawa, hosted by the [Canada – United States Inter-Parliamentary Group](#). The summit brought together diverse voices to highlight the importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to Canada’s economy and quality of life. The Cities Initiative played an active role in preparations for the event.

Cities Initiative members took the opportunity to remind the Government of Canada of its promise to invest \$1 billion in strengthening its freshwater programs and launch a Canada Water Agency to improve coordination and management of this key resource. They also spoke of the importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin for their communities and constituents.

Boosting Canadian leadership on the water file

Despite repeated commitments to improve freshwater management and investments in Canada, the federal government’s investments in freshwater do not come close matching American funding, even when accounting for population differences.

“Unfortunately, Canada has fallen behind in its commitment in recent years,” said Cities Initiative Vice-Chair, Mayor Gino Moretti of Saint-Anicet (Qc.). “The United States invests more than \$700 million (CAD) annually in the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes, which is more than 80 times the \$9 million per year that Canada is investing. It’s time we demonstrate leadership on this file.”

The event welcomed more than 100 participants in person and online, including Members of Parliament and Senators, industry representatives, environmental groups and municipal officials, among others. American speakers, including Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Rep. Jack Bergman (R-Michigan) and Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wisconsin), also lent their voice on the importance of working collaboratively across borders to improve the management of a shared water resource that is home to nearly half of Canada’s population.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Founded in 2003, the Cities Initiative is a growing coalition of more than 230 mayors and local government leaders across the eight Great Lakes States, Ontario and Quebec working collaboratively to advance the environmental and socio-economic health of communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The Cities Initiative is the largest municipally driven organization focused on issues impacting the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River and their tributaries.



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