



**GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE**
CITIES INITIATIVE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Welcomes Freshwater Investments in Government of Canada's 2023 Budget

Regional mayors have been key advocates for increased funding for freshwater protection and restoration in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin

Montreal, QC – March 28, 2023 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) was pleased to see key investments to advance the blue economy and a cleaner and healthier Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin announced today in Budget 2023 by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland.

Key provisions included in this year's budget comes after months of advocacy led by the Cities Initiative and its members, including the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Summit on Fresh Water held on February 14 in Ottawa. Those commitments include an investment of \$650 million over ten years to enhance monitoring work and restoration work in major lake and river systems, including the St. Lawrence River, Lake Simcoe. That funding also includes \$420 million for the Great Lakes announced by Prime Minister Trudeau last week.

"The significant funding announced today for freshwater restoration in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin shows that the government understands that without clean water, you cannot build a strong economy," said Gino Moretti, Mayor of Saint-Anicet, Quebec and Vice-Chair of the Cities Initiative. "This is a testament to the hard work of mayors across the basin in pushing for this funding and the power of collaborating with partners across the country to drive home that message."

The Cities Initiative also welcomes the 7-year, \$165-million investment to help launch a Green Shipping Corridor Program to reduce the impact of marine shipping on surrounding communities and ecosystems.

"We are pleased to see a commitment by the federal government to modernize and decarbonize Canada's shipping industry to ensure its long-term competitiveness, which will benefit the Niagara Region and communities along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway as a whole," added Mat Siscoe, Mayor of St. Catharines and Cities Initiative board member. "Investing in clean water and green shipping, and building on the work currently being done in the domestic shipping industry, will help ensure that communities along our great waterways remain the best places to live, work and create the jobs of tomorrow."

As the largest freshwater system in the world, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin is an invaluable resource for the people, economy and environment of our region.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational organization led by a coalition of mayors working collaboratively to promote the environmental and socioeconomic health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin for the benefit of current and future generations. With more than 230-member municipalities, the Cities Initiative is the largest municipally-driven organization in the basin.

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