

# The Cities Initiative's 2023 Federal Priorities for the United States and Canada

March 23, 2023 | Mayor Billy McKinney (Zion, IL),  
Travis Wheeler, and Phil Murphy-Rhéaume



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

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

**20** YEAR  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
2003 -2023



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Mayor of Zion, IL  
Chair, Cities Initiative



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Chief Policy Officer,  
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**Phil Murphy-  
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Canada Policy Director,  
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# WHO WE ARE

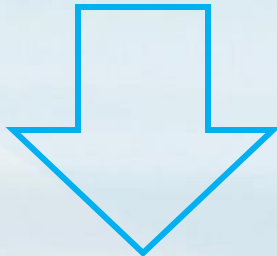
A binational coalition of Canadian and U.S. mayors working collaboratively to promote the environmental and socioeconomic health of the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River Basin



- Founded in 2003
- Developed by Mayors, for Mayors
- 230+ Members
- Largest Municipally-Driven Organization in the Basin

# FEDERAL PRIORITIES

## Member Resolutions, Mayors Commissions, & Board Feedback



## U.S. and Canadian Federal Priorities



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### 2023 Canadian Federal Priorities for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin March 2023

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian federal government to support the following priorities in order to ensure the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin remains a vibrant place to live, work and play. Founded in 2003, the Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of more than 230 Canadian and U.S. mayors and local elected leaders dedicated to promoting the environmental and socioeconomic health of communities across the basin. For more information, please contact Phil Murphy-Rheaume, Canada Policy Director, at [philippe.murphy-rheaume@glslcities.org](mailto:philippe.murphy-rheaume@glslcities.org).

#### Invest in a Freshwater Action Plan that Will Advance Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Stewardship

- Accelerate increases in funding for the Freshwater Action Plan with a \$1 billion investment over five years from the ten-year investment promised during the last federal election. Since the last election, only \$19.6 million was invested in the Freshwater Action Plan in Budget 2022.
- Ensure that increased funding for the Freshwater Action Plan leads to significant investments in community-led initiatives in the basin, such as the Great Lakes Protection Initiative and the "Programme interactions communautaires" of the St. Lawrence Action Plan, and make municipalities eligible for these initiatives

#### Implement an Independent Canada Water Agency that Will Support the Long-Term Viability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and the Communities It Sustains

- Ensure that the basin has targeted programming under the Canada Water Agency's mandate and that the agency is headquartered in the basin
- Create a Water Quality and Nutrient Management Centre under the Canada Water Agency that leverages data to support enhanced precision conservation and stormwater optimization practices
- Lead research and provide recommendations to federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments on ways to accelerate approvals for freshwater-based projects that will improve water quality (e.g., re-naturalizing shorelines)
- Ensure municipalities in the basin have a voice in the ongoing development and implementation of Canada Water Agency activities by exploring a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

#### Enable Municipalities to Provide Safe and Affordable Water for Their Communities

- Relaunch a dedicated funding program for water infrastructure, such as the short-lived Clean Water and Wastewater Fund, with a focus on phasing out combined sewers and modernizing water lines and treatment facilities that are adaptive to a changing climate and able to address persistent and emerging pollutants (e.g. untreated sewage, phosphorous, microplastics/fibres, PFAS/PFOA, etc.) that adversely impact water quality



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### 2023 U.S. Federal Priorities for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin March 2023

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. federal government to support the following priorities in order to ensure the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin remains a vibrant place to live, work and play. Founded in 2003, the Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of more than 230 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local elected leaders dedicated to promoting the environmental and socioeconomic health of communities across the basin. For more information, please contact Travis Wheeler, Chief Policy Officer, at [twheeler@glslcities.org](mailto:twheeler@glslcities.org).

#### Safeguard the Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Law

- Supplement Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund with robust appropriations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 while expanding direct funding to municipalities and reducing red tape for water-infrastructure projects
- Advise states to maximize IIJA funding provided as grants or forgivable loans by revising state-level definitions of disadvantaged communities and waiving or reducing matching requirements in recognition of the fiscal constraints facing municipalities
- Ensure state agencies have the capacity needed to administer significantly higher funding levels and assist municipalities in securing new funding

#### Prioritize Lead Service Line Replacement

- Improve the distribution of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund state capitalization grants for lead service line replacement (LSLR) by encouraging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to complete the 2022 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment while incorporating available data on LSLR burden into the allocation formula
- Expand access to robust technical assistance for LSLR — including via the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund state capitalization grants for LSLR and the EPA-administered Environmental Finance Center mechanism — in order to support municipalities in the pre-application and pre-construction phases and enable significant progress on LSLR over the next decade
- Enforce the legal requirement that states use IIJA funding for complete LSLR, including any portion on the private side

#### Strengthen Lake-Borne Commerce and the Blue Economy

- Enhance the dependability of commerce on the Great Lakes by fully funding harbor maintenance activities from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and providing no less than \$40 million to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) in FY24 for the construction of a new Great Lakes heavy icebreaker with an icebreaking capability equal to or greater than the USCGC Mackinaw
- Support the full establishment of the Great Lakes Authority (GLA) — and provide \$33 million to the GLA in FY24 — to foster the creation of a Great Lakes-wide economic and infrastructure development plan that builds towards a vision of the blue economy that increases opportunities for current and future generations to live, work and play in the basin
- Facilitate the efficient cross-border movement of cargo and passengers — including cruise tourism and related economic activity — across the Great Lakes by providing appropriate funding to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in FY24





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# U.S. FEDERAL PRIORITIES 2023





# LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Improve the distribution of DWSRF state capitalization grants
- Revise definitions of disadvantaged communities
- Expand access to technical assistance

## POLICY CONTEXT

- IIJA provides \$11.71 billion to DWSRF & \$15B for lead line replacement
- EPA formula lacks lead line data
- States determine eligibility
- Environmental Finance Centers



## KEY ACTIONS

- Prioritize lead lines via Mayors Commission on Water Equity
- Engage w/EPA, White House, Get the Lead Out Caucus, & State Revolving Funds

# GREAT LAKES COASTAL RESILIENCY STUDY

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Provide full funding for GLCRS in FY24
- Foster collaboration among USACE, states, & municipalities

## POLICY CONTEXT

- Assess vulnerabilities, identify solutions, & guide investments
- \$3.5M appropriated; \$10.6M estimated cost
- Next steps: USACE and states must complete scoping & sign PMP



## KEY ACTIONS

- Prioritize GLCRS via Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience
- Give USACE platform at webinar & AGM
- Explore connections to RCPI



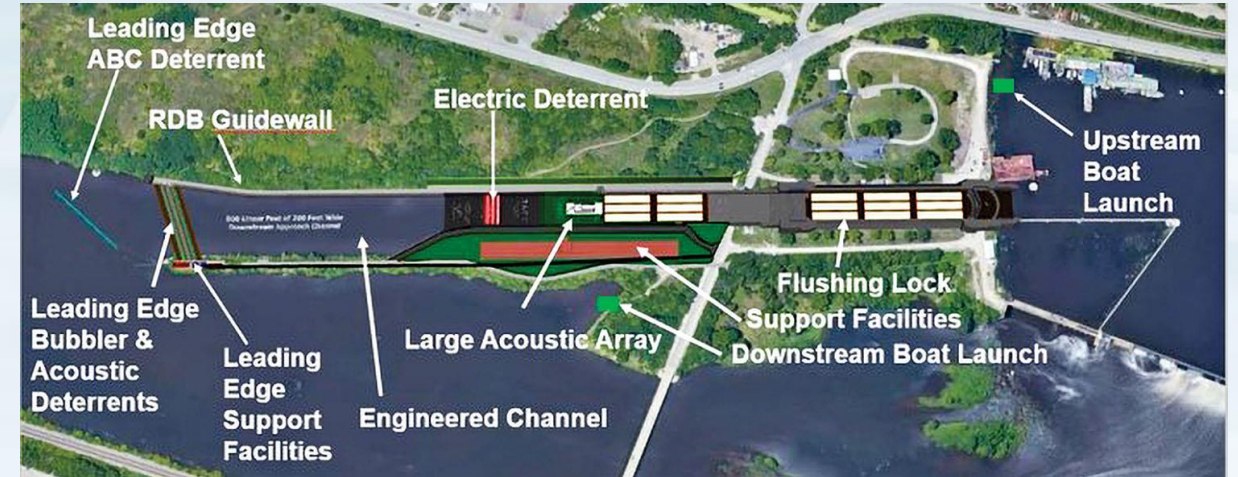
# BRANDON ROAD INTERBASIN PROJECT

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Encourage IL & USACE to sign PPA
- Authorize 100% federal cost share

## POLICY CONTEXT

- Prevent spread of invasive carp
- \$1.15B cost estimate; 90/10 cost share
- IJJA provides \$226M; \$48M appropriated
- MI & IL proposed \$114M
- Next step: IL and USACE must sign PPA



## KEY ACTIONS

- Monitor progress on PPA w/ congressional offices & partners
- Organize letter on PPA from Illinois mayors to Governor Pritzker



# ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION & WATER QUALITY

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Provide \$425M for GLRI in FY24
- Increase federal funding for PFAS water-treatment technologies

## POLICY CONTEXT

- IIJA provides \$1B for GLRI; \$368M appropriated in FY23
- 22 of 25 remaining AOCs done by 2030
- EPA has proposed federal standards to limit PFAS in drinking water for 1<sup>st</sup> time



## KEY ACTIONS

- Advocate for GLRI w/partners
- Add PFAS to policy agenda of the Mayors Commission on Water Equity



# JOINT STATEMENT

- Joint statement with other regional organizations presenting common priorities for the Great Lakes
- Consistent with the Cities Initiative's federal priorities
- Presents a powerful, unified voice from diverse groups:
  - Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
  - Great Lakes Commission
  - Great Lakes Fishery Commission
  - Chippewa Ottawa Resource
  - Healing Our Wats Great Lakes Coalition
  - Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition
  - Great Lakes Business Network
  - Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus
  - American Great Lakes Ports Association
  - Lakes Carriers Association





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# CANADIAN FEDERAL PRIORITIES 2023



# INVEST IN A STRENGTHENED FRESHWATER ACTION PLAN

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Pressing Canada to accelerate its promised investment - \$1 billion over five years

## POLICY CONTEXT

- Fall 2021 election - Federal government committed to invest \$1 billion over 10 years
- Budget 2022 - Committed only \$19.6 million with promise to announce more "at a later date"



## KEY ACTIONS

- \$1 Billion Booster for Freshwater Health campaign



# IMPLEMENT AN INDEPENDENT CANADA WATER AGENCY

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Ensure strong mandate for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin
- Improve process for approving projects that improve water quality

## POLICY CONTEXT

- CWA first announced in 2019 as a “coordinating body”
- Complexity of water management in Canada



## KEY ACTIONS

- Summit on Fresh Water
- Partner with Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative + CCHW

# ENABLE CONTINUED SAFE AND AFFORDABLE WATER SERVICES

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Renew dedicated water infrastructure funding program
- Long-term, stable and predictable funding for these critical systems

## POLICY CONTEXT

- Previous Clean Water Wastewater Fund
- Provinces + FCM also for dedicated funds for water infrastructure



## KEY ACTIONS

- Pre-Budget submission
- Provincial engagement
- Letter to Min. Leblanc



# SUPPORT CLIMATE ADAPTATION FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

## FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- Federally-led study to identify at-risk areas and priority interventions in the basin
- Renew shoreline protection funding canceled in 1997
- Renew the Natural Infrastructure Fund over five years

## POLICY CONTEXT

- Gaps in National Adaptation Strategy
- Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience recommendations(2021)



## KEY ACTIONS

- Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience
- Work with Climate Proof coalition

# NAVIGATING A DIFFICULT CLIMATE

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- **Little to no appetite for new spending** – Focus is now on cutting costs to reduce interest payments and slow down inflation
- **Several competing demands for limited new dollars** – Competing against healthcare, defense and responding to the *Inflation Reduction Act*
- **Less ambition in freshwater policy** – Despite making big commitments, sense is there is little downside in not acting
- **Need to broaden our coalition** – Demonstrating these are not just environmental issues, but socioeconomic ones



# JOIN A MAYORS COMMISSION





# ATTEND GREAT LAKES DAY & OTTAWA DAY





# SUBMIT A MEMBER RESOLUTION

- For the U.S., Canada, or Binational topics
- Submit a draft or work with policy staff
- Voted on at the AGM in June

**Submit Today!**  
**Proposals Due March 31st**



[Bit.ly/AGM2023English](https://bit.ly/AGM2023English)



[Bit.ly/AGM2023French](https://bit.ly/AGM2023French)



## 2023 Call for Resolutions

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is soliciting resolutions to be considered for review and approval at the upcoming Annual General Meeting in Chicago, June 6-9, 2023. Each year the Cities Initiative releases our resolutions to governing bodies and the general public notifying them of the important issues and initiatives we will be working on over the next year. These resolutions also guide us as an organization by directing us on a set of issues we will work on.

**This year's resolutions must be submitted by March 31, 2023.** Members that are interested in submitting a resolution are encouraged to complete this short questionnaire via Microsoft Forms. Members may either draft the resolution themselves or work with the Cities Initiative's Policy Team to develop it. If you have a draft resolution already prepared, please upload it here: [bit.ly/2023ResolutionsAGM](https://bit.ly/2023ResolutionsAGM)

### Guidelines

- In order to submit a resolution, the member must be in good standing with the organization.
- The Board reserves the right to judge how the intent of the resolution reflects the organization's policies and reserves the right to object to those resolutions that do not reflect our policy.
- The Board reserves the right not to entertain resolutions that address disputes between or among municipal governments.

If you have any questions, please contact Travis Wheeler, Chief Policy Officer, at [twheeler@glslcities.org](mailto:twheeler@glslcities.org). To learn more about our resolutions and to see examples of past submissions, please visit [glslcities.org/communications/resolutions/](https://glslcities.org/communications/resolutions/).

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

# Thank you!

## Questions?



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