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
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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

U.S. and Canadian Federal Priorities

Member Resolutions, Mayors Commissions, & Board Feedback
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 RESILIENCE 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
• IIJA 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 1st 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
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

• 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

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

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. To learn more about our resolutions and to see examples of past submissions, please visit glslcities.org/communications/resolutions/

We look forward to receiving your submissions.
Thank you!
Questions?