



**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Cities Initiative Expands Reach of Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative with an Additional \$1.5 Million**

*Solutions will now also be provided to shoreline communities on Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Superior*

**Chicago, IL, October 10, 2023** – With two new grants totaling \$1.5 million, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is expanding the reach of its Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative (RCPI) to the U.S. shorelines of Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Superior, marking a significant step in fortifying the coastal resilience of communities along the Great Lakes.

"I am proud that we at the Cities Initiative are growing this program across the region, addressing climate crisis events like shoreline erosion and flooding in Great Lakes coastal communities. As Mayor of a coastal community, I can attest to how crucial this work is," said Mayor Ryan Sorenson, Vice Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and Mayor of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

The RCPI was launched in 2021 to address acute coastal impacts affecting communities along the Great Lakes. It develops innovative, nature-based solutions that protect homes, businesses, public spaces, infrastructure, and local economies and works with communities to finance projects through federal, state and regional grants, specifically targeting new grants available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

After initially supporting communities along Lake Michigan, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River, the Cities Initiative is extending the RCPI throughout the region, with the ultimate goal to reach U.S. shoreline communities along all of the Great Lakes by 2025.

Approximately 34 million people live in the Great Lakes basin in the United States and Canada, representing about 8 percent of the total U.S. population and 32 percent of the Canadian population. The five Great Lakes include 11,000 miles of shoreline and contain approximately 20 percent of the world's supply of fresh surface water. Shoreline communities have been described as the "canary in the coal mine" when it comes to climate-related weather events

because they typically are impacted first and hardest. Already, climate-related events have collectively cost Great Lakes communities more than \$878 million, and communities are now projecting that they will spend, on average, between \$1 and \$10 million over the next two years to protect their coasts.

The RCPI is trying to step in before it is too late. Already, the program has supported more than 40 communities with their shoreline challenges. Using this initial support, several communities have secured or are applying for new funding to advance their projects toward implementation.

U.S. mayors and city leaders along Lake Superior and Lake Huron will gather to kick off the RCPI's new work on October 17<sup>th</sup> and November 6<sup>th</sup>, respectively, with Lake Erie to follow later this fall.

The Cities Initiative is partnering with regional engineering firms LimnoTech, SmithGroup and Stantec for technical expertise to outline natural solutions that build resilience while providing benefits for fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and public access.

Funding for the RCPI has been provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Fund for Lake Michigan and the Erb Family Foundation. The Cities Initiative is working to expand the RCPI to shoreline communities along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in Canada.

### **About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative**

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition led by mayors and local elected leaders 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 200 member municipalities, the Cities Initiative is the largest municipally-driven organization in the basin.

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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