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## **Cities Initiative Attends U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington, DC**

*The organization promoted the importance of the economic transformation, climate action and lead service line replacement across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin*

**Chicago – January 19, 2024** – This week, the Cities Initiative participated in the U.S. Conference of Mayors 92<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting in Washington, DC. Several member mayors – including Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, Mayor Justin M. Bibb of Cleveland and Mayor Mike Duggan of Detroit – were among the attendees of the nonpartisan forum, where mayors engage directly with the U.S. federal government on the most pressing issues of the day.

The Cities Initiative was keen to promote the importance of the economic transformation of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, particularly with respect to preparing our workforce, surrounding infrastructure, waterfronts and energy grid, as well as attracting green businesses to our communities. According to a survey conducted by Forbes Magazine a few months ago, over 75 percent of North American consumers desire green products and services. It is important that our communities take advantage of these global trends to attract businesses to our basin.

“Due to our proximity to more than 80 percent of North America’s surface freshwater supply, green industries are eager to invest in Great Lakes communities,” said Mayor Johnson. “As we welcome green industries, we must continue to protect the basin’s socioeconomic and environmental integrity so our communities remain vibrant places to live, work and play.”

The Cities Initiative also co-hosted a reception with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, Climate Mayors and C40 Cities to bring together mayors, senior officials and thought leaders on advancing climate action in communities nationwide. John Podesta, Senior Advisor to the President for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation, Senator Klobuchar of Minnesota, and Mayor Bibb, were among the featured speakers at the event.

“We cannot afford to wait when it comes to aggressive climate action,” said Mayor Bibb. “As a member of both the Cities Initiative and Climate Mayors, I am pleased that we continue to work together with the administration and Congress on implementing robust climate investments in Great Lakes communities through the Inflation Reduction Act.”

In addition, the Cities Initiative met with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assistant Administrator Radhika Fox to discuss lead service line replacement efforts across the Great Lakes.

“Great Lakes communities are home to a significant portion of the lead service lines remaining in the United States,” said Mayor Duggan. “Our communities are making great strides to reduce the risk of lead exposure via drinking water, progress that has been enabled by historic investments such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and historic collaboration across all levels of government.”

### **About the Cities Initiative**

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. It is committed to stewarding the basin’s

freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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