



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago Leads *Honoring Our Waters: The Tribal Connection to Stewardship* Launch Event**

*This project brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities for dialogue around our shared responsibility to safeguard our precious freshwater resources.*

**Chicago, IL – August 20, 2024** – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, IL, led the kick-off event of *Honoring Our Waters: The Tribal Connection to Stewardship*, a new project to foster greater awareness around the shared responsibility of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin – which contains more than 20 percent of the world’s surface fresh water – from environmental degradation.

At the Daley Plaza event, Mayor Johnson, Indigenous leaders, and other mayors toured an interactive map containing the stories of Indigenous communities that have deep-rooted ties to the basin’s fresh water. The event was supported by the City of Chicago, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and Biinaagami.

“The *Honoring Our Waters* project is a vital contribution to our regional dialogues on climate resilience and investments to safeguard our precious freshwater resources and surrounding communities,” said Mayor Johnson. “As the climate crisis intensifies, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities must work in partnership to ensure that all basin communities remain vibrant places to live, work and play for current and future generations.”

The *Honoring Our Waters* project will continue to organize dialogues for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the coming months, using the interactive map as a tool to encourage such conversations across the basin.

### **About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence 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. The organization 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.

**Website:** <https://glslcities.org/>

**About Biinaagami**

Translated from Anishinaabemowin, Biinaagami (BEE-nah-ga-meh) means pure, clean water. Biinaagami is a multimedia, change-provoking initiative rooted in Indigenous knowledge. Through ceremony, mapping, inclusive storytelling, augmented reality, experiential learning, community water hubs and ecosystem restoration, Biinaagami aims to rebuild just and healthy relations between wildlife, people and place in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence watershed.

Biinaagami is a call to action. Biinaagami affirms our shared responsibility to this tapestry of land and waters that many call home.

**Website:** <https://www.biinaagami.org/>

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