



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE**  
CITIES INITIATIVE  
**L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES**  
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Cities Initiative Welcomes Quebec's National Water Plan and Implementation of the Blue Fund**

*After advocating for more freshwater funding, the coalition of municipal leaders looks forward to positive impact the Plan will have on protecting this vital resource in Quebec.*

**Quebec City, QC – September 17, 2024** – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is delighted to welcome Quebec's National Water Plan and the implementation of the Blue Fund.

Through the National Water Plan, the Quebec Government will draw \$500 million from the newly adjusted royalties and other funding sources for projects to address pollution and infrastructure needs. The Plan is comprised of seven key guidelines, including \$161.7 million to ensure quality water for the population, \$21.2 million to capitalize on the water's economic potential, and \$54.7 million to promote sustainable water use.

The Cities Initiative was a key advocate for higher fees on industrial water users in the province and for greater funding to support freshwater protection projects that will support stronger communities.

*"Today's announcement is a step in the right direction to ensure the protection, restoration and enhancement of water in Quebec,"* said Catherine Vallières-Roland, Deputy Mayor of Quebec City and member of the Executive Board of the Cities Initiative. *"The Cities Initiative is determined to work with the government to ensure that municipalities are key partners in the implementation of this plan and benefit, over the coming years, from it for a more sustainable, equitable and efficient use of our water."*

*"Municipalities play a key role in protecting and restoring our freshwater resources,"* said Mayor of Repentigny, Nicolas Dufour. *"That is why we look forward to working with the Quebec Government to fully implement the National Water Plan and generate community benefits across the province."*

*"Better protection of source water does not only make sense environmentally, but also economically and socially,"* declared Mayor of Saint-Anicet and Co-Chair of the Cities Initiative, Gino Moretti. *"Reducing pollution sources and restoring damaged ecosystems requires sustained collaboration, such as outlined in the National Water Plan, to maintain our communities as vibrant places to live, work, play and invest."*

Bill 20, which established the Fund and made water protection a priority in the province, was unanimously adopted by the Quebec National Assembly in June 2023. As a result, Quebec companies that withdraw more than 75,000 liters of water per day have been paying higher royalties to the provincial government since January 1, 2024. The National Water Plan and Bill 20 were supported by the Cities Initiative through participation in the Water Action Forum and testimony in Parliamentary Commissions in Spring 2023. The Cities Initiative will continue to work closely with the Quebec Government and the Action Forum on Water to ensure that its members can tap into this funding quickly to deliver on projects on the ground.

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

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of more than 260 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.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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