

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Cities Initiative Leads Historic Delegation of U.S. and Canadian Mayors and First Nations leaders to Washington D.C. to Participate in Great Lakes Day

This important mission gave over 30 leaders the opportunity to advocate for a strong U.S.-Canada trade relationship and other priorities with decisionmakers in the Capital

Washington, DC – March 7, 2025 - This week, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative led a delegation of more than 30 U.S. and Canadian mayors, First Nations leaders, and other local government officials to Washington, D.C., to participate in Great Lakes Day. They advocated for a strong U.S. – Canada trade relationship and other federal priorities with decisionmakers in the U.S. capital.

In over 20 meetings with Congressional leaders, senior administration officials, and business representatives, the Cities Initiative delegation reiterated the organization's firm opposition to blanket 25 percent tariffs on all Canadian goods entering the United States.

The Cities Initiative's Board of Directors recently [passed a resolution](#) opposing the blanket 25 percent U.S. tariffs on Canadian imports. The resolution calls on federal governments to institute relief measures for affected municipalities, recognizing the need to protect workers, businesses, and local economies from the consequences of a trade war. It also urges state and provincial governments to take all necessary steps to strengthen the U.S. – Canada trade relationship. An analysis by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that these tariffs, along with Canadian retaliatory measures, could reduce annual GDP by 1.6 percent in the United States and 2.6 percent in Canada.

Mayor Valérie Plante, Montréal, QC: "Despite the current challenges between our federal governments, the members of the Cities Initiative stand strong and united in our shared economic and environmental commitment. Over the past few days, our delegation has had more than 20 meetings with members of Congress and the US administration. It was a real marathon, and it's fair to say that we made our voice heard. Urban diplomacy is extremely important right now, especially when there's a lot of instability at the highest decision-making level. We love working with American cities, and our strong business ties benefit the citizens we work for. We've been carrying these messages together over the last few days, and I think we've been well heard."

Mayor Austin Bonta, Portage, IN: "For Portage, for Indiana, and for the entire Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region, this partnership is critical. Canada is Indiana's #1 trading partner, with \$15.4 billion in goods and services exported to Canada annually. More than 148,000 Hoosiers have jobs directly tied to trade with Canada—this isn't just about numbers; it's about real people, real livelihoods, and real communities."

Mayor Bruno Marchand, Québec City, QC: "For more than 70 years, our region has worked to become a North American and, indeed, a global economic powerhouse. One hundred million people live in the wider region, occupying 50 million jobs. Together, in terms of economic output, our region generates more than \$7 trillion every single year. We have unlocked the potential of this region by working together. Barriers to the free and fair trade that has supported our shared prosperity for over a half-century will stifle our shared ambitions of building the economy of the future."

Mayor Andrea Horwath, Hamilton, ON: "Hamilton's steel, manufacturing and agri-food industries will be hit hard by U.S. tariffs and disruptions in our cross-border supply chains. So too will Ontario's auto sector. It's worth recalling that Canada is the number one customer of the United States, and 50 percent of this vital economic activity happens across the Great Lakes region. Trade with Canada represents over 14 percent of Michigan's economy. Our supply chains are so integrated that there is no such thing as an 'American' or 'Canadian' product—we have one Great Lakes economy."

Mayor Eddie Melton, Gary, Indiana: "The mayors and leaders here today represent millions of people whose livelihoods depend on cross-border trade. It's time we take action to protect those jobs and safeguard the economic future of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. We must work together to keep our borders open to goods and services, build resilience, and foster new, clean industries for the future."

Mayor Stéphane Boyer, Laval, QC: "Over the past decades, trade between our two countries has led our region on a path of shared economic prosperity. Together, we have forged leading industries, companies, and multi-billion-dollar supply chains that span our borders—a relationship that has been the envy of the world! We must not let a trade war destroy this remarkable bilateral relationship built through friendly cooperation—and competition. Mayors across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region stand together to ensure our communities and economies remain strong."

Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard of Mt. Vernon, New York: "The U.S.-Canada partnership is essential to our shared economic success, and Mount Vernon is no exception. Canada is New York's number one trading partner, supporting over 520,000 jobs in our state and driving nearly \$30 billion in annual trade. Yet, as of March 10, 2025, Ontario, Canada, is imposing a 25% tax on electricity exports to New York and other U.S. states—a stark reminder that we are not just neighbors, but partners whose economies are deeply intertwined. This is further evidence that no one wins in a trade war and that's why we need to work together to ensure a stable trade environment for jobs and businesses in our communities."

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region is the third largest economy in the world, producing US\$6 trillion in annual economic output. Canada is the top export market of every Great Lakes state and bilateral trade supports more than eight million jobs in the United States, many of them in our region.

The Cities Initiative Delegation included:

- Mayor Marcus Muhammad of Benton Harbor, Michigan
- Mayor Kate Wdowiasz of Dunkirk, New York
- Mayor Eddie Melton of Gary, Indiana
- Village Administrator Jeremy Shaffer of Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio

- Mayor Byron Nolen of Inkster, Michigan
- Mayor David Bogdala of Kenosha, Wisconsin
- Mayor Jack Bradley of Lorain, Ohio
- Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard of Mount Vernon, New York
- Mayor Austin Bonta of Portage, Indiana
- Mayor Steve Salter of Whitehall, Michigan
- Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige of Anishinabek Nation
- Councillor Pete Frost of Township of the Archipelago, Ontario
- Mayor Tom Mrakas of Aurora, Ontario
- Mayor Patrick Brown of Brampton, Ontario
- Mayor Marianne Meed Ward of Burlington, Ontario
- Councillor Lauren Anderson of Chatham-Kent, Ontario
- Mayor Lucas Cleveland of Cobourg, Ontario
- Mayor Andrea Horwath of Hamilton, ON
- Mayor Berry Vrbanovic of Kitchener, Ontario
- Mayor Stéphane Boyer of Laval, Québec
- Councillor Alvin Tedjo of Mississauga, Ontario
- Mayor Valérie Plante of Montreal, Québec
- Mayor Bruno Marchand of Québec City, Québec
- Deputy Mayor Catherine Vallières-Roland of Québec City, Québec
- Cities Initiative Co-Chair and Mayor Gino Moretti of Saint-Anicet, Québec
- Mayor Mat Siscoe of St. Catharines, Ontario
- Councillor Paul Ainslie of Toronto, Ontario

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About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of municipal and Indigenous government executives representing communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region who are working to promote economic prosperity and protect our fresh water for the benefit of current and future generations. With more than 270 member communities, the Cities Initiative is leading the way in advancing the environmental, economic, and social health of the region by addressing issues impacting its residents.

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