U.S. and Canadian Mayors Speak Out About the Economic Impact of Across-the-Board U.S. Tariffs on Canadian Imports

Impact of Tariffs and Response Could Devastate Communities on Both Sides of the Border

Chicago, IL – April 2, 2025 – Today, nine U.S. and Canadian municipal leaders from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region, representing a coalition of more than 270 municipal and Indigenous government executives, came together to voice their deep concerns about the economic consequences of expected blanket tariffs on Canadian imports into the United States.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is urging unity and bilateral action to safeguard a vital regional economy that accounts for over half of the two-way trade between the United States and Canada. Trade actions by the U.S. administration will trigger a Canadian response, magnifying a looming trade war between both countries and leading to devastating consequences for the region, the world's third-largest economy that generates over US$6 trillion in activity every year.

Mayor Brandon Johnson, City of Chicago, Illinois: "The implementation of these tariffs would be a stark reminder of the profound economic challenges that lie ahead not only for Chicago but for communities across the United States and Canada. Our city is exposed to a trade war and Illinois stands to lose more than 33,000 jobs and nearly US$20 billion in export revenue. This would be a devastating blow to our local economy, affecting countless families and businesses. Chicago has long been a hub of trade and cooperation between our two nations, and we must continue to work together across borders to advance policies that protect our workforce and sustain our economic growth. Now more than ever, we need collaboration and partnership to minimize the impact on our communities and support those who are most vulnerable to these disruptions."

Mayor Olivia Chow, City of Toronto, Ontario: "Canada and the United States have enjoyed a longstanding and deep friendship. As the largest city in Canada with $123 billion in U.S. trade every year, Toronto stands against President Trump's unnecessary trade war which harms workers, businesses and families on both sides of the border. Tariffs will increase the cost of groceries, gas, housing, and automobiles for both Canadians and Americans while putting thousands of jobs at risk. In Toronto, we are taking action to build a more resilient economy and call on President Trump to end this senseless trade war."

Mayor Cavalier Johnson, City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin: "The trade disruptions between the United States and Canada are putting Milwaukee and the entire state of Wisconsin at serious risk, with more than 17,000 jobs and US$7.9 billion in export revenue on the line. Our local industries — including manufacturing, construction, and automotive — are facing escalating costs that directly impact housing affordability, gas prices, and overall economic stability. As we see the costs of materials and fuel rise, the burden on our residents and businesses grows heavier. We urge federal leaders to pursue balanced trade policies that protect jobs and maintain the vital economic connection between Wisconsin and Canada."

Mayor Andrea Horwath, City of Hamilton, Ontario: "Tariffs between Canada and the U.S. are already having a destabilizing effect on Hamilton and area's economy — putting at risk over 60,000 jobs and nearly $3.5 billion in economic output across our steel, advanced manufacturing, agri-food, and goods movement & logistics industries. Behind those numbers are real people — it's workers in our factories, farmers in our greenhouses, truck drivers, dock workers, and business of all sizes. These are the people who have helped build one of the most prosperous and successful trading relationships in the world. Their livelihoods depend on a partnership that has fueled jobs, innovation, and growth on both sides of the border. In cities like Hamilton and Buffalo — like Windsor and Detroit — we don't just trade with each other, we build things *together*. We need to protect that partnership, not undermine it with instability. Now is the time for smart, stable, and fair trade that creates thriving communities and supports families."

Mayor Bruno Marchand, Québec City, Québec: "As a city that plays a crucial role in Canada's economic strength and facilitates essential cross-border commerce, Québec City cannot afford to let these disruptions jeopardize our community's stability and prosperity. With over 55,000 jobs in key industries directly affected by these tariffs and CA$4 billion in annual export value at stake for our metropolitan area, it is imperative to restore a cooperative trade policy that safeguards jobs and supports the interconnected economies of Québec City and its American trading partners within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region and beyond."

Mayor Malik Evans, City of Rochester, New York: "There is an African proverb that says, 'When the elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers,' which perfectly illustrates how a trade war between the United States and Canada will impose the greatest amount of undeserved suffering on low-income and middle-class consumers and small businesses in cities like Rochester. Tariffs will generate regressive cost increases on essential goods and services, delivering the greatest harm on those who can least afford to absorb them. They also introduce unprecedented and unnecessary instability to the entire New York State economy, which threatens more than 55,000 jobs and $17.4 billion in export revenues. We need thoughtful, sustainable trade policies that support the financial wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents and the long-term success of our job creators."

Mayor Rob Burton, Town of Oakville, Ontario and Chair of the Ontario Auto Makers Caucus: "We urge our governments to prioritize effective solutions for tariffs. One thing, with or without tariffs, that we need to do is get our regulations and policies into alignment for efficiency. Aligning policies will strengthen our economies and support the 3.5 million people on both sides of the border who drive this industry forward, including those in raw materials, manufacturing, the auto supply chain, shipping, and dealerships."

Mayor Mat Siscoe, City of St. Catharines, Ontario: "U.S. tariffs put St. Catharines and the entire Niagara Region at significant risk, with up to 30,000 jobs on the line. Our community's economy relies heavily on industries like automotive manufacturing, agriculture, and the wine sector — all of which could face severe disruptions if these tariffs take effect. The intricate cross-border supply chains that support automotive production are especially vulnerable, and any disruption could lead to reduced competitiveness, job losses, and long-term economic instability. As a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, I am calling for cities in our region to work together on a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Strong response that will maintain our vital cross-border relationship built over many decades that has supported good Canadian and American jobs."

Mayor Austin Bonta, City of Portage, Indiana: "The trade disruptions between the United States and Canada pose a serious threat to Portage and the state of Indiana, with more than 28,000 jobs at risk and nearly US$14 billion in export revenue on the line. As one of the largest manufacturing economies in the country, Indiana's industries — from steel production to automotive parts and medical instruments — face severe challenges that could undermine our local workforce and economic stability. We urge federal leaders to prioritize sustainable trade policies that protect our jobs and maintain the integrity of our regional economy, which includes vital ties with Canada."

The Cities Initiative remains committed to advocating for cooperative solutions and strengthening U.S.-Canadian relations to protect jobs, trade relationships, and economic stability for Canadian, U.S., First Nations and Tribal communities throughout the region.

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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