



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2026

REPORTING PERIOD: May 2025–May 2026, with select updates through Summer 2026



OUR REACH



437+

Communities
Represented



40

New
Members



23M+

Residents
Represented



11

Mayors
Joined Big City
Caucus



13

Non-profits
Joined Allies
Program



14

Businesses
Joined Industry
Leaders Circle



7+

Events Across the Region
& Our National Capitals

- Annual Conference
- U.S. Water Leaders Summit
- Ontario Water Leaders Summit

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

\$4M
in Grants

- NOAA
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Government of Ontario
- Private foundations



35

Additional U.S.
Communities



\$4M

New Coastal Resilience
Grant & Partner Dollars

15 Great Lakes Communities

GLRI funding in
collaboration with NOAA
for coastal resilience
projects



\$1.5M Local Blue Economy Growth Fund

Small grants +
knowledge mobilization |
\$1M available to
members for stormwater
and wastewater projects

Vacant-to- -Vibrant

3 Technical Service
Firm Partnerships |
33 Desktop
Analyses



Adapting to Coastal Hazards

16 Ontario mayors and
councillors receiving
training to become local
Coastal Resilience
Champions

\$430,000 | 4R Waters

Awarded by Canada
Water Agency
Remote sensing +
community science to
identify pollutants and
develop remediation action
plans in two watersheds
in Niagara Region

Laying the Groundwork for \$240M+ in Coastal Resilience Investments

4 million in new grant
and partner dollars
allocated to assist 35
additional U.S. communi-
ties in designing coastal
resilience projects. This
work lays the necessary
foundation for future
investments in construct-
ing coastal resilience
solutions estimated at
\$241M across these
communities



4 Great Lakes Communities

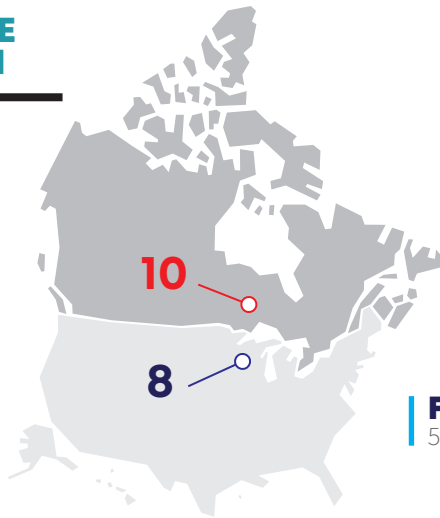
Lead Service Line
Replacement Case
Studies



Source: Estimated average funding per project based on 2024 data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), indicating Coastal Resilience projects at approximately \$6.88 million each.

A STRONG VOICE FOR THE REGION

18
Resolutions
U.S.: 8 | Canada: 10



50 Business Leaders + Members Mobilized
Supporting a strong U.S.–Canada trade relationship

**Protecting Our US\$9T / CA\$12T
Regional Economy**

Fresh Coast Economic Corridor
500K New Companies | 18M New Jobs



UNITED STATES

Great Lakes Day |
Washington, D.C.

**20 Members | 4 Federal Offices Engaged
| 22 Congressional Offices Engaged**

Advocating for 2026 U.S. federal priorities,
with additional engagement with senior
U.S., Ontario + Québec officials

Federal Advocacy Priorities

- GLRI
- Clean Water & Drinking Water SRFs
- USMCA/CUSMA
- Great Lakes Trade
- Brownfields
- Lead Service Lines

EPA Brownfields Program

Advocated for **reauthorization
at \$250M/year**

Brandon Road Interbasin Project

Renewed advocacy to prevent the spread
of invasive carp into the Great Lakes



CANADA

Federal Freshwater Funding

Submitted member-informed
recommendations for the Canada
Water Agency's new Municipal Stream
under the Freshwater Action Plan.

Expanding Maritime Trade

Mayoral advocacy helped secure
expanded CBSA container clearance to
Québec City + Hamilton; developed a
Marine Municipal Network

Day on the Hill | Ottawa

Helped advance Budget 2025 priorities:

\$5B Trade Diversification
Corridors Fund

\$51B Build Communities Strong Fund
CBSA Expansion

Water Policy

Member recommendations brought to
Québec's Forum d'action sur l'eau to
help shape Plan national de l'eau

Québec Growth

First-ever Québec Coordinator hired to
strengthen engagement across the
province

Funding Influenced

**\$10B | Québec–Ottawa
Infrastructure Agreement**

Municipal drinking water infrastructure
+ ETAP Waterfront Transformation

**\$1B | Québec Municipal Water
Infrastructure Fund**

Municipal water infrastructure
upgrades + ETAP

FIRST NATION & TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

First Nation & Tribal Engagement Committee Report

Three-year roadmap for
reconciliation, inclusion +
collaboration

2 Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative Projects

Keweenaw Bay Indian
Community | Bay Mills Indian
Community

Turtle Island Scholarship 2026

Saugeen Ojibway
Nation



BUILDING & CONNECTING OUR COALITION



Partnership Highlights

- Western Ontario Wardens Caucus
- Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus
- Illinois River Cities and Towns Initiative
- Swimmable Cities
- Biinaagami



Events & Engagement

300+ Annual Conference Attendees

100+ NEXUS H2O + AC26 Municipal Innovation Exchange Participants



Communications & Reach

4,500 Making Waves Newsletter Subscribers

115,100 LinkedIn Impressions

161 Media Mentions

CELEBRATING REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Members of the Year

- Mayor Cory Mason, Racine, WI
- Councillor Lauren Anderson, Chatham-Kent, ON
- Mayor Nicolas Dufour, Repentigny, QC

Rob Ford Community Leader

Warden Bonnie Clark,
Peterborough County, ON

Barb Hodgins Award

Angela Tovar, Chicago, IL

Wege Award

- Benton Harbor, MI
- Gaspé, QC
- Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Impact Award

Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie,
Toronto, ON



The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of municipal and Indigenous government executives representing communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. The Cities Initiative is comprised of a U.S. organization and a Canadian organization.

www.gslcities.org



**GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE**
CITIES INITIATIVE