



For Immediate Release – Media Release

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors convene in Toronto

Group calls on Canadian and American governments to invest in “Cities as the Solution” to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River

Toronto, July 17, 2008 - Mayors from nearly fifty local governments in Canada and the United States joined host Mayor David Miller in Toronto for the Annual Member Meeting and Conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI). The mayors called on their federal governments to recognize municipalities as drivers of national economies and leaders of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River protection. As such, proper investment by the Federal governments in cities and local infrastructure must be at the center of a bi-national strategy to protect and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

“Cities must be at the heart of a renewed bi-national commitment to protect and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence,” said Mayor Miller, Founding Canadian Chair of GLSLCI. “Dedicated investment in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence infrastructure makes economic and environmental sense for the entire region.”

Pointing to a recent survey showing an investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence by local governments of more than \$15 billion annually, the mayors questioned why national governments were investing so much less than cities to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. “It is no longer appropriate or accurate to view cities as the problem. Through innovation and investment, cities have shown themselves to be the solution,” said Racine Mayor Gary Becker, outgoing Chair of GLSLCI.

“With targeted investments to protect and preserve our natural resources, like those outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, Federal governments can unleash the full potential of cities to continue to address our national challenges,” said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, who founded GLSLCI in 2003. “Make no mistake – an investment in the Great Lakes is also an investment in cities, which ultimately impacts all our national economies,” added Daley.

Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson, incoming Chair of GLSLCI, asked the Federal governments to partner with cities on an equal level. Citing the low level of Federal investment as compared with municipalities, Peterson said “we need both Federal governments to step up and match the \$15 billion investment by cities so that we can achieve meaningful and long-lasting progress, while creating jobs and economic growth throughout the region.”

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of 55 mayors and other local officials that works actively with governments and stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin. The annual conference is being held July 16-18 at the Sheraton Centre Hotel (123 Queen Street West) in Toronto, Canada

For more information, please visit www.glslicities.org.

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