



Canadian Federal Party Leaders plans for Great Lakes and St Lawrence River protection

Toronto, (October 10, 2008) – The following commitments to protect the Great Lakes and St Lawrence River were provided by four of the five federal political parties in response to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) questionnaire sent to Federal party leader on September 22. The Conservative Party of Canada has yet to respond to the questionnaire. The Cities Initiative has sent similar questions to the two U.S. Presidential candidates. Complete responses to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) questionnaire can be found at www.glslcities.org

Highlights

Liberal Party of Canada

- Would invest \$400 million in a Canada Water Fund, to:
 - increase water monitoring and reporting
 - clean up “hot spots” in the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg;
 - fund research on emerging pollutants
 - fight invasive species;
 - map Canada’s underground aquifers; and,
 - support the on-farm and community-based fresh water development programs of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.
- Would dedicate at least \$10 billion of strategic infrastructure, particularly green infrastructure such as water and sewage treatment, and clean energy grids.
- Would dedicate \$3 billion for dedicated Small Communities Infrastructure Fund.

New Democratic Party of Canada

- Would commit \$2.5 B for 2009-2010 for Environmental Re-investments which includes \$70 m specifically allocated for Water, Parks and Conservation.
- Would create a \$10 m Safe Water Fund to address issues of emerging pollutants and help communities monitor water quality.
- Would enact a Blue-Green Algae Proliferation Prevention Act, including a ban on the sale of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent, and provide compensation to farmers for expanding buffer zones to protect waterways from harmful nutrients.

Green Party of Canada

- Would provide funding to municipalities through a new “Water and Waste Treatment Facilities Municipal Superfund” to enable replacement of chlorination systems with ozonation, ultraviolet sterilization, sand filtration and other safe water purification system and would also allow communities bordering the Great Lakes to directly address their pressing water concerns.
- Would move to address invasive species in the Great Lakes by developing protocols for ballast water flushing prior to entering the St. Lawrence.
- Strengthen the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to deal with endocrine disrupters and pharmaceuticals in water.

Bloc Quebecois

- Would advocate for the creation of a 500 million dollar compensation fund to counter the negative impacts of climate changes, which would serve to compensate the provinces for costs related to climate change already incurred, and would also give them the means of financing measures to mitigate its effect.
- Would advocate for an unconditional and recurring transfer of federal funds to the provinces, leaving the provinces to decide what is spent on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.
- Would continue to pressure the federal government to implement the \$0.05 gas tax immediately rather than to wait for fiscal year 2009-2010 as planned.

Conservative Party of Canada

No response provided to the questionnaire

“The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has made this information public during the election for the one in three Canadians who drink, swim, fish and earn a living from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence,” said Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson, chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “Now we all have the information we need to decide which party will best protect this vital lifeline.”

“Given the national and international importance of the largest source of fresh water in the world, it is essential that the next Federal Government make a substantial commitment to protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence”, said Toronto Mayor David Miller. “It is equally important that our federal government works closely with the next federal administration in the United States to modernize our bi-national strategy to protect this shared resource.”

A report by the Washington-based Brookings Institution concluded that investment in the Great Lakes would result in a 200% return on investment, and would serve as an economic catalyst to an area hard hit by the downturn in the manufacturing sector.

“Investment in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River is essential to the future prosperity of Quebecers and Ontarians,” said Mayor Denis Lapointe of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, board director of the Cities Initiative. “This is not simply a local issue, but also a matter of national economic importance.”

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of 60 Canadian and U.S. mayors that works actively to advance the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

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