



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent

# NEWS

## **ONTARIO AND GREAT LAKES MUNICIPALITIES SIGN PACT**

*McGuinty Government and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative agree to bring municipal voice to Great Lakes discussions.*

**NEWS**

July 17, 2008

TORONTO – The McGuinty Government and municipal officials from around the Great Lakes today began a new era of working together to meet the challenges of restoring, protecting and conserving the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

A Memorandum of Cooperation signed today by provincial ministers and Ontario representatives of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) commits them to consulting and cooperating on issues of municipal interest and responsibility around the Great Lakes.

Ontario agrees to consider the advice and recommendations of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative on implementation of the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin (COA). The Cities Initiative agrees to involve its Ontario members and the broader municipal sector in providing input into decisions that affect the municipalities around the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of over 50 mayors and other municipal officials from Canada and the U.S. interested in the health and well-being of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system.

The Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by John Gerretsen, Minister of the Environment, Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources and Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The three ministers are also Ontario's signatories to COA.

Signing on behalf of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities initiative was Mayor Lynn Peterson of Thunder Bay, Chair of the Cities Initiative. The signing took place at the annual conference of the Cities Initiative, in Toronto, Ontario.

## QUOTES

### **Environment Minister John Gerretsen:**

“Today we formally recognize the importance of engaging municipalities as key partners in sustaining the health and vitality of the Great Lakes for our benefit, but also for our children and future generations.”

### **Natural Resources Minister Donna Cansfield:**

“The signing of this memorandum marks the beginning of an exciting new era of collaboration among municipal, provincial and federal governments to address the challenges affecting the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem and help us safeguard this precious natural resource for future generations.”

### **OMAFRA Minister Leona Dombrowsky:**

“This agreement reinforces the collaborative approach of the Government of Ontario in carrying out its commitments under the Canada-Ontario Agreement. Our rural and urban municipalities have a vital interest in the Great Lakes and through this memorandum will play an even larger role in helping us protect and restore them.”

### **Mayor Lynn Peterson of Thunder Bay Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative:**

“By signing this agreement today, we are ensuring that our joint efforts to protect the Great Lakes, provincially and locally, will have the greatest positive impact for our communities. The Cities Initiative looks forward to working closely with Ontario municipalities and the Ontario Government on future Great Lakes decisions.”

### **Toronto Mayor David Miller Founding Canadian Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative:**

“ This memorandum of cooperation represents the beginning of an important strategic partnership between the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Ontario Great Lakes municipalities and the Ontario Government”, said Toronto Mayor David Miller, “From Nipigon in the North to Toronto in the South, Ontario municipalities are investing over \$2 billion to protect the Great Lakes every year.”

## QUICK FACTS

- Ninety-eight per cent of Ontarians live within the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem and the watersheds that drain into the Great Lakes. They depend on the Great Lakes for drinking water, food production, power generation and recreation.

- The current COA, signed with the federal government in 2007, runs to 2010. COA commits the Canadian and Ontario governments to coordinate resources and funding and to work with organizations and citizens to restore and protect the lakes and the biodiversity of the Great Lakes Basin.
- A recent Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative-Great Lakes Commission study estimates that local governments around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin in Canada and the U.S. invest \$15 billion annually in infrastructure and programs to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

## LEARN MORE

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative  
[www.glslcities.org](http://www.glslcities.org)

About The Canada Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin  
Ecosystem  
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/greatlakes/coa/index.php>

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