



July 17, 2008

**THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
2008 ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING & CONFERENCE**

BACKGROUND

Over 150 government officials, business interests, NGOs and other stakeholders joined mayors for the Annual Member Meeting & Conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI), from July 16-18 in Toronto, Canada.

With a conference theme, 'Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities: Prosperity Vitality, Sustainability', delegates and invited guests discussed issues including investment in municipal infrastructure, fluctuating water levels, protecting the St. Lawrence, best practices of cities, and promoting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin as an important economic and ecological region.

Key speakers included Premier Dalton McGuinty, Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen, Ontario Natural Resources Minister Donna Cansfield, G.E. Canada C.E.O. Elyse Allan, United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard, Commissioner Sam Speck of the International Joint Commission, Toronto Mayor David Miller, and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, among others.

Highlights of the conference include:

- A call to federal governments to put cities and infrastructure investment at the center of their joint Great Lakes-St. Lawrence strategy; and
- The signing of a Great Lakes pact between GLSLCI and the Government of Ontario; and
- A number of important resolutions adopted by GLSLCI membership.

Call for Investment in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Infrastructure

Mayors David Miller of Toronto, Lynn Peterson of Thunder Bay, and Richard M. Daley of Chicago joined GLSLCI mayors in calling on Canadian and US federal governments to put investment in cities at the center of a renewed binational commitment to protect and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin. To be most effective, the mayors called for an 'equal partnership' in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence investment between the federal governments and the local level.



The mayors agreed that we must take advantage of a historic opportunity to make significant progress on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection, with the possible renegotiation of the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement for the first time in a generation.

GLSLCI, in collaboration with the Great Lakes Commission, released a report earlier this year that showed that local governments in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin invest more than \$15 billion annually in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection and infrastructure, with approximately \$4 billion spent in Canada and \$11 billion spent in the US. It is this level of investment that the mayors are calling on the two federal governments to match.

Great Lakes Memorandum of Cooperation

Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen, representing the Ontario Government, and Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson, chair of GLSLCI, signed an agreement that establishes a strategic partnership between Ontario municipalities and the Ontario Government in collaborating on Great Lakes decisions.

Under the agreement, GLSLCI and the Ontario Government commit to establishing a process of early engagement and consultation with Ontario municipalities to provide strategic advice to the Ontario Government as it enters negotiations on the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Key Resolutions passed at the Annual Conference

A number of important resolutions were adopted by the GLSLCI membership at the conference, including:

- A call to Canadian and US federal governments to increase and introduce dedicated funding respectively for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence water and wastewater infrastructure;
- A call to Canadian and US federal governments to move forward with renegotiating a new Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;
- A call on governments to ban the sale of water inefficient household appliances;
- A call for the US Congress to approve the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact to virtually ban water diversions.



The full text of all resolutions adopted at the 2008 conference may be found at www.glsccities.org.

Contacts:

David A. Ullrich
david.ullrich@glscities.org
Cell 312.480.6501
Office 312.201.4516

Nicola Crawhall
nicola.crawhall@sympatico.ca
Cell 416.432.2739
Office 416.463.4938