



Councillor Paul W. Ainslie
City of Toronto Councillor
Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood
Chair, General Government Committee
Chair, Scarborough Community Council
Chair, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Chair, Federation of Ontario Public Libraries
Night Economy Champion, City of Toronto

Email: councillor_ainslie@toronto.ca
Website: www.paulainslie.com
f Councillor Paul Ainslie Scarborough-Guildwood
f Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood
X @Ainslie_ward24
@cllrainslie
@PaulAinslieWard24



Date: March 19, 2025

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Chair and Executive Committee

Re: Participation in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Advocacy Days and Advocacy Against Tariffs

Recommendation:

1. City Council receive the report on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Advocacy Days held March 5 to 7, 2025, for information.

Background:

From March 5-7, I represented Mayor Chow and the City of Toronto as a delegate at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's "Advocacy Days" in Washington, D.C. This initiative brought together Canadian and American mayors to advocate for the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence watershed and to oppose proposed tariffs that threaten cross-border trade and economic stability. Meetings with U.S. Mayors, Senators, and Congressional leaders from both Democratic and Republican parties emphasized the significant economic impact of potential tariffs on both sides of the border, particularly on Toronto and the broader Ontario region.

<https://glslcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GLSL-Cities-Initiative-Press-Release-Great-Lakes-Day-2025.pdf>

Key Activities and Findings:

- **Participation in Advocacy Days:**
 - The delegate participated in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's "Advocacy Days" (www.glslcities.org), joining mayors from Ontario, Quebec, and various U.S. districts.
 - The primary focus was to advocate for the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence watershed and to address the potential negative impact of tariffs.
- **Advocacy Against Tariffs:**
 - Meetings were held with U.S. Mayors, Senators, and Congressional leaders, highlighting the detrimental effects of potential tariffs.
 - Key points emphasized during these meetings included:
 - Tariffs threaten jobs and disrupt integrated supply chains, putting at risk eight million American jobs dependent on trade with Canada.
 - Tariffs weaken the \$6 trillion Great Lakes economy, which drives 50% of all U.S.-Canada trade.
 - Tariffs jeopardize decades of cross-border cooperation, hindering efforts to strengthen economic ties.
- **Economic Impact on Toronto and Ontario:**
 - Toronto drives an estimated \$123 billion in trade with the United States, contributing 25% of Ontario's GDP, workforce, and businesses.
 - The Toronto region accounts for 20% of Canada's economy and 53% of Ontario's economy.
 - As a financial and business hub, Toronto plays a critical role in U.S.-Ontario trade, with Ontario merchandise exports to the U.S. increasing 25% from \$202 billion to \$252 billion between 2019 and 2023.

Constituency Office
Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Drive
Scarborough, ON M1P 4N7
Tel: 416-396-7222

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite C52
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Tel: 416-392-4008
Fax: 416-392-4006

- The U.S. is Canada's largest trading partner. A 25% blanket tariff on all U.S. imports will heavily impact Canada, Ontario, and Toronto.

I had the pleasure in participating in a series of meetings and events:

Congressional Meetings Representative Frank Mrvan – Indiana -01 - Democrat Senator Todd Young – Indiana - Republican Representative Debbie Dingell - Michigan -06- Democrat Representative John Moolenaar - Michigan-02 – Republican Representative Bill Huizenga – Michigan -04 – Republican Senator Kirsten Gillibrand – New York – Democrat - Staff Additional Congressional Meetings Senator Chuck Schumer – New York – Democrat - Staff	Great Lakes Day Congressional Breakfast Reception Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith of Mississippi – Republican Events Canada Embassy Reception Congressional Lunch U.S. Dept of Agriculture Roundtable Industry Leaders Roundtable on a Strong U.S. Canada Trade Relationship Dinner and Dialogue with Global Water Leaders Breakfast with the Ambassador to France Press Conference on Trade Debrief Lunch
--	---

The Advocacy Days provided a crucial platform to address the potential economic consequences of tariffs on Toronto and the broader region. The meetings with U.S. officials underscored the importance of maintaining strong cross-border economic ties and the need to oppose protectionist policies. The information gathered and the relationships established during these meetings will be valuable in ongoing efforts to protect the economic interests of Toronto and the Great Lakes region.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's "Advocacy Days" (www.glslcities.org)
Attachment 1: Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Key Messages and Asks.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Ainslie
City of Toronto, Councillor
Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood