



NEWS RELEASE

Mayors call on Canadian federal party leaders to protect Great Lakes and St. Lawrence US Presidential candidates raise Great Lakes as national issue

Toronto, (September 22, 2008) - Mayors representing over 7 million Canadians in Ontario and Quebec today issued a letter calling on the five leaders of the parties in the Canadian federal election to publicly declare their proposals for protecting the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

"Canadian municipalities are spending over \$4 billion a year on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection," said Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson, chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "Given the national and international importance of this fresh water resource, it is time we have a substantial commitment from our federal government."

Canadian members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative issued the letter after US Presidential candidates raised the importance of Great Lakes protection in their federal election campaign.

"We are encouraged that, through the activities of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and other organizations, both U.S. presidential candidates are acknowledging the critical importance of protecting this vital resource," said Toronto Mayor David Miller. "Senator Barack Obama has come forward with his proposal and Senator John McCain has made known his concern for the future of the Great Lakes. It is time our federal party leaders stepped up and made their voices heard."

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.

"The protection of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River is essential to the economic wellbeing of Ontario and Quebec and in our relationship with the US," said Denis Lapointe, Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and board director of the Cities Initiative. "It must be made a matter of federal importance."

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of 60 mayors that works actively to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

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Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, Founding United States Chair

David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair