



**MAYOR CALLS FOR FEDERAL CONSENT OF GREAT LAKES COMPACT
CITES LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL INVESTMENT OF \$15 BILLION TO URGE FEDERAL
SUPPORT OF INTERSTATE COMPACT**

Washington, D.C. (July 30, 2008) – Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Michigan testified today to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary regarding federal consent for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (Compact). Mayor Heartwell is the Vice Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a coalition of more than 55 U.S. and Canadian cities that work together to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

“The Compact represents a commitment to stewardship by eight states, based on extensive input from cities, Native American tribes, and many other stakeholders, of the fresh water of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence,” said Mayor Heartwell in his testimony.

Heartwell commended the Governors of the eight Great Lakes states and the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec for their efforts on the Compact and the parallel Agreement in Canada. He emphasized that protecting the vast freshwater system upon which more than 40 million people rely for drinking water is the right and responsibility of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, and requires a commitment from all orders of government and citizens from both the U.S. and Canada.

“Water is the lifeblood of our cities,” said Heartwell in his testimony. “We have the good fortune of living in the basin of a true, global freshwater treasure.” On behalf of the Cities Initiative, Heartwell encouraged federal consent of the Compact so that it becomes law, and cited the efforts already being made by those in the region, particularly cities, towards managing the waters of the Lakes and River wisely. Heartwell highlighted the study completed by the Cities Initiative earlier this year with the Great Lakes Commission that documented over \$15 billion annually in investments by local governments in the U.S. and Canada to protect and restore the resource. Additionally, Heartwell emphasized the Cities Initiative Water Conservation Framework through which cities voluntarily commit to reduce water consumption by 15 percent between the years 2000 and 2015.

“Cities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin recognize the need for the region to lead by example to save this precious resource,” said David Ullrich, Executive Director of the Cities Initiative. “It is a powerful statement when cities along the shores of the world’s premier freshwater system are doing what they can to conserve every drop and invest in the proper infrastructure to maintain the quality of the water.”

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Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Chair

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

David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair



To read Mayor Heartwell’s testimony and to learn more about the Cities Initiative, please visit www.glslcities.org/news. To read a press release from the City of Grand Rapids on Mayor Heartwell’s testimony, visit www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 56 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

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