



The Whig-Standard (Kingston, ON)

Order/Commande

55233

Date 14.02.2007

Circ. 28000 Page 4

1/1

OUR VIEW

A price worth paying

KINGSTON MAYOR HARVEY ROSEN HAS BEEN ASKED to join an important Canada-U.S. organization that is working to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River so citizens can drink the water, eat the fish and swim at beaches without worry.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Initiative, which merged the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors, is composed of mayors and local officials from both sides of the border. Headed by Toronto mayor David Miller, the group recently played a key role in stopping a U.S. Coast Guard plan to carry out live-fire weapons training in 34 "safety zones" on the Great Lakes. One of the zones was located 20 kilometres off the shores of Wolfe Island.

Environmental damage caused by discarded ammunition was one of many concerns. Kingston Senator Hugh Segal believes Canada still needs a say in any future military use of the waterways.

Last fall, the group proposed that silver carp be added to the growing list of invasive Great Lakes species. The organization has lobbied U.S. president George Bush for more regional collaboration on such issues as water quality, beach closures, and shoreline restoration.

Kingston is one of 90 cities that currently participate in the initiative, but only 32 are actively involved in "charting a course for the care of the world's largest freshwater system," to quote the group's website. David Miller recently invited Rosen to be part of the core group of members, noting that "Kingston would be a valuable addition to the organization."

Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence are the source of Kingston's drinking water; keeping them healthy is vital to our well-being and the local economy. Kingston should be at the table when the mayors meet, not because "green issues" are the rage right now but because the city has an abiding interest in the water we drink, the fish we eat and the beaches we visit - and want our children and grandchildren to visit.

The \$7,000 membership fee should not prevent Kingston from joining the organization. City councillors should consider it a small price to pay to participate in this important environmental initiative.

