



## **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative** **Presidential Questionnaire**

### **WATER CONSERVATION / MANAGEMENT**

**Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact:** A continual concern to the Great Lakes region is the health and maintenance of the waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system, one of the largest surface freshwater supplies in the world. Significantly low lake levels across the Great Lakes and recent drought situations in the Southwest and Southeast make paramount the need to ensure proper resource management is applied to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact is an agreement between the eight Great Lakes States and two Canadian Provinces on how to manage the Great Lakes as a resource. Specifically, the Compact includes the following key elements:

- Economic development will be fostered through the sustainable use and responsible management of Basin waters;
- There will be a ban on new diversions of water from the Basin. Limited exceptions could be allowed, such as for public water supply purposes in communities near the Basin, but exceptions would be strictly regulated;
- The States and Provinces will use a consistent standard to review proposed uses of Basin water;
- Regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency will be developed, and they will be reviewed every five years. Each State and Province will develop and implement a water conservation and efficiency program.

The Compact has passed two state legislatures (Illinois and Minnesota) and compatible legislation has been passed in Ontario and is moving forward in Quebec. The Compact is awaiting passage in the other six Great Lakes States. As President, would you support the implementation of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact?

### **REGIONAL COOPERATION**

**Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC):** The GLRC is a cooperative effort to restore, protect, and promote the sustainable use of the Great Lakes. Eight priorities have been identified as the organizing principles for the GLRC strategy:

- Action to stop the introduction of aquatic invasive species
- Habitat conservation and species management
- Protection and improvement of the near shore waters and coastal areas
- Acceleration of the clean-up process at areas of concern identified in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
- Diminution of non-point sources of pollution
- Reduction of existing toxic pollutants and prevent the introduction of new toxins
- Improve the information base and establish reliable representative indicators
- Take action to ensure the long term sustainability of the Great Lakes

Based on these goals, do you support the GLRC as a blueprint for ensuring the health of the Great Lakes? Furthermore, as President, how would you address the lack of a clear governance structure for the Great Lakes?

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*Gary Becker, Mayor of Racine, Chair*

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

*David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair*

## FUNDING

**Clean Water State Revolving Fund:** This year, the Brookings Institution released a report detailing how an investment of \$26 million in the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes could lead to over \$50 million in economic activity and other benefits throughout the Great Lakes region. However, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which provides much needed loans to municipalities to help ensure, among other things, the Great Lakes remain a clean, reliable source of drinking water, has been cut by over \$463 million from 2002 levels without taking inflation into account. Would you support increasing the amount of federal funds available through this fund?

**Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Fund:** Historical wastewater infrastructure challenges contribute directly to the discharge of raw and untreated sewage into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Aging infrastructure also contributes to water and energy consumption through water loss. Solving these infrastructure issues is paramount to the protection and preservation of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The lack of current federal funding causes local governments to raise water rates and other taxes in order to fund temporary infrastructure solutions. As President, would you support the creation of a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Fund to provide grants and loans for municipalities to invest in long-term infrastructure improvements?

**Areas of Concern:** The United States and Canada identified the 43 most contaminated locations on the Great Lakes as areas of concern (AOC), under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with Canada. 31 of these sites are either wholly or partially located in the United States and, to date, only one has been restored. In order to facilitate a rapid acceleration of cleanup programs, do you support amending the Great Lakes Legacy Act to increase funding and streamline the process?

## STRENGTHENING REGULATIONS

**Invasive Species:** Over 180 aquatic invasive species have already had a significant negative impact on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence ecosystem and economy. The National Aquatic Invasive Species Act was introduced in March of 2007 but has not advanced from committee. Do you support this and similar legislation to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species and to provide funding for existing aquatic invasive species control?

**Ballast Water:** Ballast water is a significant contributor to the continued introduction and spread of these aquatic invasive species. However, current ballast water regulations have proven to be ineffective and ballast water legislation has been slow to move through Congress. As President, would you support legislation creating a ballast water regulatory program and treatment standard?

## REPRESENTING MUNICIPAL INTERESTS

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is an independent binational organization that was established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 with the recognition that each country is affected by the other's actions in lake and river systems along the border. Its purpose is to help prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of boundary waters and to advise Canada and the United States on related questions. The IJC is comprised of six members: three are appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and approval of the Senate, and three are appointed by the Governor in Council of Canada, on the advice of the Prime Minister. As President, would you use one of your appointments to the IJC to appoint someone to represent the perspective and interests of local municipalities?