



## NEWS RELEASE

### GREAT LAKES SHORTCHANGED BY NOAA

July 10, 2009 -- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) expressed disappointment at the very small number of coastal restoration projects recently funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the Great Lakes Region. Out of 50 grants awarded, only three went to the eight Great Lakes states, and only \$16.1 million out of \$167 million. The remaining 47 projects and \$150.9 million went to 19 other states and two territories.

Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Chair of the Cities Initiative, said, "Although there have been signs recently that Washington recognizes the value of the Great Lakes and the serious threats to them, this distribution of funds does not even come close to reflecting the needs and priority of this tremendous freshwater resource. Although we are pleased with the three projects funded in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana, there are many more deserving of Federal funds in the Great Lakes region."

Mayor Don Ness of Duluth, Board member for the Cities Initiative added, "It is hard to believe that two states received funds for 15 projects, and the rest of the country shares the remaining 35, with the eight Great Lakes states having only three. There is a fundamental absence of fairness and equity in a system that leads to this result."

With many more funding decisions coming in the future under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Cities Initiative trusts that future distributions will reflect more balance across the country, and especially considering the tremendous value of the Great Lakes, which represent almost 20% of the surface fresh water in the world. The Cities Initiative also points out that President Obama's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for \$475 million becomes even more important because of this distribution inequity.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of 65 U.S. and Canadian cities representing 13 million people. The Cities Initiative works toward a more sustainable future, with balanced progress on environmental, economic, and social

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[www.glslcities.org](http://www.glslcities.org)

*George K. Heartwell, Mayor of Grand Rapids, Chair*

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

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



issues. Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago is the founding U.S. Chair and Mayor David Miller of Toronto is the founding Canadian Chair. For more information, please visit [www.glslcities.org](http://www.glslcities.org).

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