



## Cities Demand Shoreline Restoration Progress in GLWQA Renegotiation

CHICAGO, DECEMBER 11, 2009 – At their semi-annual Board of Directors meeting in Chicago, Mayor Richard M. Daley and the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative drew a line in the sand - along every beach, waterfront and shoreline around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Cities are calling for a formal role in renegotiation and implementation of the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, to bring their strategic perspective and substantial investment power to the table to protect the Great Lakes shoreline.

“Making progress along the shoreline of the Great Lakes is of critical importance to cities and our residents who use and enjoy the water on a daily basis,” said Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell, current Chair of the Cities Initiative. “By reducing urban stormwater runoff and sewer overflows, growing green roofs, and making our beaches clean and safe, cities have done more than our part, but we cannot do it alone.”

This past June, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon announced that the two countries will renegotiate the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* for the first time in 22 years. The agreement has traditionally focused on the open waters of the Great Lakes, even though much of the pollution originates at the shoreline. This has resulted in beach closings, the collapse of the coastal aquatic environment, an explosion of nuisance algae, and extensive natural habitat loss. In response, government officials have indicated that the nearshore will receive special attention in this round of negotiations.

“This is the first chance in a generation to rethink how we are going to protect the Great Lakes,” said St. Catharines Mayor Brian McMullan. “We fully expect that mayors will be seated at the table to provide their perspective on a coordinated approach and a division of responsibilities to most effectively protect the Lakes.”

“The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River are intimately connected, both ecologically and economically”, said Denis Lapointe, Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Quebec. “In recognition of the important relationship between these great bodies of water, the Great Lakes Agreement should take into account, and provide the necessary protection for, the St. Lawrence River.”

Cities on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence invest an estimated \$15 billion each year in protecting this natural freshwater resource of global significance. For too long, that investment was not reciprocated by the federal governments. Recently, the U.S. government committed \$475 million under its Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. This important step, however, is only a down payment on the work that needs to be done. To fully fund the restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and adequately protect our coastal areas, a similar financial commitment must be made by Canada and the U.S. must continue its investment.

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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



“President Obama’s \$475 million commitment to protect and preserve the Great Lakes sets an example as to the kind of federal support that is needed on an on-going basis in order to execute the goals of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement,” said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Founding U.S. Chairman of the Cities Initiative. “As Mayors, it is essential that funding for projects is distributed directly to cities so restoration can begin as quickly as possible.”

*The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 70 mayors and other local officials that works to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. For more information please visit [www.glslcities.org](http://www.glslcities.org).*

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