



February 27, 2008

Dear Neighbors on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence,


We are very pleased to share with you the results of the first-ever survey of local government investment in the future of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. With funding support from the Joyce Foundation, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative worked with the Great Lakes Commission to complete this study. We hope you agree that the results demonstrate the dedication of local authorities to preserving this important resource.


More than 140 units of local government responded to the survey and reported investing almost \$3.3 billion annually, including \$2.5 billion on water quality management and \$784 million on ecosystem protection. Extrapolating these figures, a conservative estimate is that local governments in the United States and Canada invest over \$15 billion annually on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin ecosystem.


This investment highlights the fact that local governments are on the front lines when it comes to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Providing fresh drinking water, world class beaches, effective wastewater infrastructure, and vibrant parks requires a significant financial commitment. This survey proves that local governments are willing to rise to the challenge and do their part to ensure a high quality of life and economic well-being for more than 40 million people.

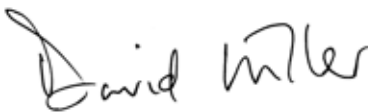
Over the past several years, local governments have become much more active in making decisions and implementing programs related to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. With the magnitude and number of threats to the resource, we believe there is an urgent need to take still more action. While we look forward to working with partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors to bring about the improvements needed, we believe that this survey only underscores the sizeable commitment already made by local governments to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,


Mayor Gary Becker, Racine
Chair


Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chicago
Founding United States Chair


Mayor Lynn Peterson, Thunder Bay
Vice Chair


Mayor David Miller, Toronto
Founding Canadian Chair

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