



Mayors Recommend Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Priorities *Feds Urged to Include Local Government in Negotiations*

Trois-Rivières, Québec (June 18, 2009) -- At the sixth annual Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Meeting in Trois-Rivières, Québec, Mayors congratulated the U.S. and Canadian Federal governments for agreeing to negotiate a new Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). The Great Lakes mayors called for the new Agreement to be in place by June of 2010 and for local government to be included as full partners in the negotiation and implementation of the Agreement.

“These magnificent lakes are now facing more complex threats than were ever considered twenty-five years ago,” said Toronto Mayor David Miller, Founding Canadian Chair of the Cities Initiative. “A new agreement must be forward-looking, results oriented and address new threats to the Lakes.”

The GLWQA is the primary agreement between Canada and the United States to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. Last amended in 1987, the agreement fails to address some of the most serious threats to the Great Lakes that have developed over the last twenty-five years, such as emerging toxic chemicals, aquatic invasive species and climate change.

“This announcement is good news for cities surrounding the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River,” said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Founding U.S. Chair of the Cities Initiative. “Cities have led by example on protecting and preserving our natural resources and we look forward to continuing to be part of this important process.”

The Mayors expect that they will be included in the negotiation and implementation of a new agreement given that, collectively, local governments are the largest financial contributor to Great Lakes protection and directly implement many of the actions that protect and restore the lakes. A recent survey found that local governments spend an estimated \$15 billion annually to protect and restore the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Local government involvement is also expected on the implementation of the law that was recently passed by the Quebec National Assembly, *An Act to affirm the collective nature of water resources and provide for increased water resource protection*, which provides for increased water protection within the province. Mayors of the Cities Initiative anticipate a partnership between local government and the province in order to realize the objectives of the Act.

“Cities are very happy to see the Quebec Government’s law on increased water resource protection,” said Mayor Denis Lapointe, Vice Chair of the Cities Initiative. “We are fully

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Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Chair

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prepared and eager to partner with the provincial government to ensure the waters of the St. Lawrence River are protected and managed in a sustainable manner.”

Mayors of the Cities Initiative also launched a new program today to help keep pharmaceuticals and personal care products out of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The *Cities Initiative Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products Framework* tracks the volume of pharmaceuticals and personal care products collected by municipalities and assists local government with improving their local collection and disposal efforts where there is an absence of adequate action by manufacturers, retailers and other governments. Eleven member cities collected close to 700,000 pounds of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in the year 2008 alone.

“Local government has proven its leadership on the issue of proper collection and disposal of pharmaceuticals and personal care products,” said Cities Initiative past Chair Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay. “Mayors would like to see increased producer accountability for their products, including the collection and disposal of pharmaceutical and personal care products.”

The Mayors are also calling for the federal governments in both countries to review the need for increased environmental testing of drugs as part of federal drug or chemical approval processes in Canada and the U.S.

“While we are fortunate to have effective medication to protect us from illness, we must be mindful of their effect on our waterways and our drinking water,” said Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, the new Chair of the Cities Initiative. “Like other chemicals, pharmaceuticals and personal care products should be subject to an environmental review to determine their potential impact on the natural environment, particularly our waterways.”

To see proceedings from the 2009 Cities Initiative Annual Member Meeting and Conference, please visit www.glslcities.org/annual2009.htm.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of 64 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. To learn more, please visit www.glslcities.org.

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