



NEWS RELEASE

Canadian and U.S. Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors Say Urgent Investment in Public Infrastructure and Creating Jobs is Key to Economic Recovery

December 12, 2008, Toronto – Canadian and U.S. mayors passed a resolution [www.glslcities.org/news.htm] today that calls on the Canadian and U.S. national governments to prepare an urgent economic recovery package that accelerates public infrastructure investments, creates jobs and promotes a healthy and sustainable environment and economy in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region.

“Canadian and U.S. Mayors agree that we need massive investments in public infrastructure that will both create jobs in the short term, and build essential infrastructure for a greener, cleaner economy into the future,” said Toronto Mayor David Miller, Founding Canadian Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (the Cities Initiative). “The need is urgent and time is of the essence.”

The mayors of the Cities Initiative Board of Directors, gathering for their mid year meeting in Toronto, shared information on proposed economic recovery packages in Canada and the U.S. There was particular interest in President-elect Barack Obama’s repeated commitment to invest in green infrastructure and innovation.

“We need to lead by example by calling on our national governments to partner with cities to invest in infrastructure projects like sewer, water and transportation systems,” said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Founding U.S. Chair of the Cities Initiative. “These investments will not only benefit our region, but the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence economy, one of the most important regional economies in the world.”

At their meeting, the mayors examined ways to expedite the funding cities need to start construction on infrastructure projects, thus creating new jobs, in early 2009. Mayors agreed that a key to moving quickly was getting funding directly to cities, where projects are ready to be delivered without bureaucratic delays.

“Getting the money out the door and shovels in the ground by next year is the key to stimulating our local and national economies,” said Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson, Chair of the Cities Initiative. “There is concern amongst Canadian municipalities that the federal Building Canada process cannot deliver fast enough. We need a new process, more like the gas tax process, to get money to cities as quickly as possible.”

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Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Chair

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

David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair



“The Quebec government has prioritized water and wastewater projects for infrastructure investment. This is very positive for St. Lawrence municipalities,” said Salaberry-de-Valleyfield mayor Denis Lapointe. “Now we must work together to get these financial resources in the hands of municipalities to create jobs that are needed for both our economic recovery and environmental improvement.”

Founded in 2003, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal and first nation governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. With leadership from Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, Founding U.S. Chair, and Mayor David Miller of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair, the Cities Initiative has grown to include sixty-one member municipalities from across the Basin.

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