

January 22, 2004

## MAYORS ASK EPA CHIEF TO SUPPORT GREAT LAKES RESTORATION

Members of the Great Lakes Cities Initiative, an organization of U.S. and Canadian mayors, met today with Michael O. Leavitt, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to seek his support for federal legislation to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

"The Great Lakes are a national and international treasure, and they're vitally important to the residents of hundreds of cities and towns in the United States and Canada," said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, who chairs the Initiative. "We need strong federal legislation that will help preserve the Great Lakes and provide for input from state and local officials."

The Great Lakes Cities Initiative supports a bill sponsored by Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Chicago and 105 Republican and Democratic co-sponsors.

It would authorize \$4 billion over five years for Great Lakes restoration projects, which would be based on priorities set by a Great Lakes Advisory Board, composed of federal officials, governors and mayors. The bill would allow funds to be directed to cities and towns for local projects.

The initiative also supports a similar bill introduced in the Senate by Sen. Mike DeWine of Ohio and 10 co-sponsors from both parties.

Daley formed the Initiative, which has members from more than 40 cities in the United States and Canada, to give mayors a stronger, unified voice into policies affecting the Great Lakes, and to share ideas and programs that affect Great Lakes ecology.

"Our cities have a significant impact on Great Lakes ecology with so many of our actions – from the way we handle ice and snow to the way we manage drinking water to the way we handle our storm water," Daley said. "Actions taken by one city can affect every other city on the Great Lakes – because water pays no attention to government boundaries."

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