



Great Lakes Protection Climbs Back onto Ontario Political Agenda *Ontario provincial parties pledge to introduce Great Lakes protection legislation*

Ottawa (Ontario), Monday, October 3, 2011- Today, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative released the results of its *Ontario Election 2011 Questionnaire on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Protection*. Ontario's main political leaders pledged to take concrete action to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, the largest source of fresh water in the world.

“The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are a global treasure, and the source of drinking water to most Ontarians,” said St. Catharines Mayor Brian McMullan, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “It is vitally important that the next government of Ontario demonstrate political leadership in protecting this priceless environmental and economic resource.”

Ontario's Green Party, Liberal Party, New Democratic Party and Progressive Conservative Party all responded to a questionnaire prepared by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

Highlights:

The Green Party of Ontario stated the following commitments:

- A ‘green infrastructure’ strategy, including \$285 million over four years for enhanced water treatment and sewage management programs
- Compensate farmers and landowners for environmental goods and services that lead to clean air and water, by expanding the Alternative Land Use Services
- Prioritize planning for liveable communities with vibrant local economies.

The Liberal Party of Ontario stated the following commitments:

Implementing a *Great Lakes Protection Act* and a \$52 million Great Lakes program to:

- Better prevent pollution and runoff such as phosphorus from getting into the Great Lakes by working more closely with regional partners
- Clean up the pollution hot spots, with Nipigon Bay and Peninsula Harbour on Lake Superior, Detroit River, Niagara River and Bay of Quinte as the next priorities
- Reconnect Ontarians with the Great Lakes in their communities by promoting recreational opportunities, improving beaches and supporting community programs.



The New Democratic Party of Ontario stated the following commitments:

- Implement a *Great Lakes Protection Act*
- Designate one Minister responsible for the protection of the Great Lakes with a vision of the Great Lakes as a shared public resource
- Work with municipalities and other governments to develop a coastal protection strategy.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario stated the following commitments:

- Protect all programs that safeguard the quality of water
- Support local conservation efforts in protecting Ontario's many signature rivers such as the Thames, Don, French and Ottawa, including protecting riverbanks, cleaning debris and stocking fish.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative questions ranged from each party's commitment to increase leadership and investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, to protecting beaches and coasts to the impacts of climate change.

"Canadian cities invest more than \$4 billion in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence every year, but these waters are not solely a local responsibility", said St. Catharines Mayor Brian McMullan, Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "All orders of government must invest to protect this source of fresh water of national and global significance."

For the questionnaire and the responses from each party, see www.glslcities.org

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of over eighty mayors representing over fourteen million people, concerned with the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin.

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