



New Democratic Party of Ontario,

c/o Jeff Andrus,

support@on.ndp.ca

September 14, 2011

Dear Andrea Horwath,

Please find attached questions from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, which are being sent to each provincial political party during this election campaign, concerning your party's position on issues of importance to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

Could you kindly return the completed questionnaire by no later than **4pm on Thursday, September 22nd 2011** to our Deputy Director, Nicola Crawhall at <nicola.crawhall@rogers.com>. The responses from the parties will be released publicly and posted on our website during the campaign.

The GLSLCI is a bi-national, non-partisan association of over eighty mayors and heads of council, representing over 14 million Great Lakes and St. Lawrence citizens. The mayors are collectively dedicated to the protection, restoration, and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. If you have any questions concerning this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Nicola Crawhall, Deputy Director, at 613-232-1336, or nicola.crawhall@rogers.com.

www.glslicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer



Thank you in advance for the time devoted to answering these questions and best of luck in your campaign.

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Campaign 2011 Questionnaire

Leadership

Over a number of years, action on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection has been delayed on several fronts. Negotiations on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement have been delayed and the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem has been extended several times rather than reviewed and renegotiated to reflect current conditions. A renewed political commitment to the Great Lakes is sorely needed.

1) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, how would you demonstrate political leadership in the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence?

Given our location and the economic, cultural and environmental importance of the Great Lakes, and the extent to which our province's laws, policies and activities impact on the Lakes, it is critical that the Government of Ontario focus more attention on the protection of the Great Lakes.

If elected, we will implement a Great Lakes Protection Act that designates one Minister clearly responsible for the protection of our Great Lakes and ensures that decisions by all Ministries protect the quality and quantity of the Great Lakes.

We will work with bodies like the International Joint Commission to strengthen international agreements for protection of the Great Lakes. We

www.glsicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer



will work with the Official Opposition in Ottawa to get the Federal government to invest more seriously in funds for Great Lake protection (their spending has been negligible compared to that of the US government).

We will support a vision of the Great Lakes first and foremost as a shared public resource, rather than as a source of private profit for companies. This vision is already reflected in community efforts across Ontario to pass resolutions to ban sale of bottled water in municipally-owned facilities and at municipal events, to reject private-public partnerships for water and sanitation services, and to recognize water as a human right.

At the provincial level, we have promoted this vision by urging the provincial Government to reference the right to water in the Water Opportunities Act (it refused). We also proposed legislation to ban bottled water sales in provincial government facilities and joined Ontario's Environment Commissioner in calling for a significant increase to fees for water-withdrawals (large companies in Ontario currently pay less than \$4 for a million litres of water).

Investment

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence system constitutes the largest source of fresh water in the world. It is plagued by a number of environmental challenges that require dedicated funding to be effectively addressed, including escalating nutrient levels resulting in algae build-up, chemical loadings from products and direct discharges; invasive species, the impacts of climate change, stressed habitat and species, the impact of agricultural and urban run-off on nearshore waters, contaminated sediment, to name a few.

2) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, after a review of government finances, would your government commit to increasing the provincial financial commitment to the protection and

www.glsicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer



restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence (exclusive of infrastructure) next year?

Yes. As part of the development of legislation and objectives for Great Lakes protection we will assess resource needs.

Water Quality and Stormwater

As a result of climate change and urban intensification, the negative impact of stormwater runoff on nearshore water quality is worsening, becoming one of the primary sources of pollutants to the Lakes. At the same time, many communities are experiencing increasing stormy conditions, basement flooding and flash floods.

3) If your Party forms the next Government of Ontario, what is your plan to help Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities improve and expand their stormwater activities and floodwater conveyance to reducing flooding and reduce the impact of runoff on Great Lakes water quality?

There is clearly a need to invest in aging sewage infrastructure. The NDP has made a number of commitments to help municipalities deal with fiscal demands. We will continue with a significant \$35 billion investment in municipal infrastructure, and we will work with municipalities to expand revenue for investments (for example by reviewing the Development Charges Act to make sure that growth pays for growth).

We will pay increased attention to cost-effective, environmentally friendly approaches such as water-efficiency programs and “soft path” green

www.glsicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer



infrastructure approaches to reduce sewage flow such as green roofs, porous asphalt, stormwater detention ponds and constructed wetlands. These initiatives keep stormwater out of the sewers and use natural systems to remove pollutants, which leads to a higher quality of storm water ultimately being released.

We will consider incentives to help property owners protect against flooding.

Beach and Coastal Improvements

Many parts of Ontario are seeing increasing pressure on waterfront lands from increasing population, development pressures, increased erosion and changing water levels. Ontario is also fortunate to have some of the most beautiful beaches in the Great Lakes, and yet these receive little government support to provide a safe, enjoyable family day at the beach.

4) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, how would you work with Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities to improve lakefront and coastal planning and improved support for beaches?

The NDP will work with municipalities and other governments to develop a comprehensive coastal protection strategy which will include a range of measures such as watershed planning in prioritized areas, education and incentives for private landowners to engage in coast protection, land protection in priority areas, strengthening of the Provincial Policy Statement to ensure protection for coastal wetlands, stronger regulation of phosphorous and other emissions, improved stormwater techniques, and the promotion of shoreline conservation through Official Plans. The NDP has already

www.glsicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer



committed to expanding source water protection to northern Ontario, as recommended in the Walkerton Inquiry.

Climate Change Prevention and Adaptation

Many parts of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are already feeling the effects of climate change with lowered water levels in the upper lakes, severe storms causing erosion, less ice cover over the winter months, and increased water temperatures causing increased growth of algae along the shorelines.

5) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario (or if your party is in opposition), how would you assist Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities to address or adapt to the effects of climate change?

We will move forward with the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Plan to mitigate the risks and costs of climate change. We will also seek to prevent the dangers of climate change in first place by strengthening efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will develop a plan within a year to achieve reductions of GHG emission of 20% (from 1990 levels) by 2020. Unlike the Liberals and the Tories, we will move ahead with the implementation of a cap and trade market in 2012.

Thank you for your response.

Please return to Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Deputy Director, Nicola Crawhall at nicola.crawhall@rogers.com by Thursday, September 22 at 4 pm.

www.glsicities.org

Brian McMullan, Mayor of St. Catharines, Chair

Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, Vice-Chair

Régis Labeaume, President of Québec Metropolitan Community, Secretary/Treasurer