

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent



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Quarterly Newsletter

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A New Organization: The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

On May 26, 2005, in Québec City, the members of the Great Lakes Cities Initiative and the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors agreed to join forces and move forward as one organization. The new

organization, named the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, represents nearly 15 million people in 80 member cities. The Cities Initiative will continue to represent the interests of local governments in the development and implementation of

regional policies and programs. The organization will continue operating out of the Chicago office, with future plans to open offices in Toronto and Québec City.

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Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

The Cities Initiative has been an active participant in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC), an unprecedented effort in the United States to bring federal, state, local, and tribal representatives together to devise a strategy to protect and restore the Great Lakes. The Canadian government decided to be

observers to the process. On July 7, 2005, in Duluth, Minnesota, the GLRC released a draft Action Plan containing recommendations for action. The draft is available for review at <http://www.glrc.us/>, and the GLRC invites public comment. The Cities Initiative is forming a committee of Board members to prepare formal

comments. Cities are invited to review the document and provide input on what should be included in the comments. Comments are due on September 8 and the final Action Plan is scheduled for release on December 12, 2005.

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Annex 2001 – Sustainable Water Management

The Council of Great Lakes Governors has released a second draft of a binational agreement to sustainably manage the waters of the Great Lakes. The Agreement prohibits new or increased diversions out of the Great Lakes basin, with limited

exceptions for communities straddling the basin, and for those in counties partially within the basin. The agreement emphasizes water conservation, and these provisions may have specific ramifications for cities. The Cities Initiative is forming a committee to

draft formal comments on the Agreement. Cities are invited to review the draft document, available at <http://www.cqlg.org/>, and provide input on what should be included in the comments.

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Chairman
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Network of Best Practices

Part of the vision for the Cities Initiative includes the creation of a network of Best Practices to identify, highlight and share information among cities about successful local initiatives that protect and restore the environment while encouraging the vitality of our communities. To date

there are 15 documents written by local officials describing such efforts. Recent additions include a program to reduce mercury in the City of Superior, Wisconsin, and a demonstration project by the City of Duluth, Minnesota to prevent sand spread on winter roads from reaching Lake Su-

perior. Visit the website at <http://www.greatlakescities.org/> to read more. If your city has had success with local initiatives that protect our water resources, please share information about your efforts with other cities.

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An Unnerving Precedent in Devils Lake, North Dakota

It may seem unusual that a proposal to drain water from North Dakota's Devils Lake into Manitoba's Sheyenne River has generated so much alarm all the way in the Great Lakes Region. That alarm, however, is because this potentially destructive activity may go forward

without environmental review and without referral to the International Joint Commission (IJC). To some, this seems like a violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty, which prevents one country from unilaterally taking action that impacts the other's waters. In addition to opening the

door to invasive species from one water system to another, it sets a bad precedent for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. The Cities Initiative has voiced its opinion that the project should not go forward before review and approval by the IJC.

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Local Government Spending Survey for U.S. Cities

The U.S. federal government estimates it spends half a billion dollars a year on efforts that directly affect water quality in the Great Lakes. The Cities Initiative would like to know how much U.S. cities put into similar activities. When summed

across all cities in the basin, expenditures on these activities – including wastewater treatment, stormwater management, water conservation, brownfield or waterfront development, and lakefront land preservation – represent a sizable contribution.

The Cities Initiative will be surveying member cities in an attempt to estimate how much is spent by local governments collectively.

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Calendar of Events

- **August 29** — Public comment period ends for Annex 2001 draft
- **September 9** — Public comment period ends for GLRC Draft Action Plan (check the GLRC website, <http://www.glrc.us/>, for dates and locations of public meetings)
- **October 6 & 7** — GLRC meeting in Rochester, New York
- **December 12** — GLRC Final Action Plan release at Summit II in Chicago, Illinois

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