



# Making Waves

## Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2011

### ***Cities Initiative Board of Directors Meet in Chicago***

The Cities Initiative Board of Directors met in Chicago on December 2nd for their annual midyear meeting. Host Mayor, Rahm Emanuel, welcomed the Board of Directors to Chicago and spoke of the great work being done on the city's riverfronts. His remarks focused on the 'new recreational waterfront' the city is developing along the Chicago River. Mayor Emanuel echoed the comments of other Board mayors in expressing the need to bring folks to the waterfront.



The Board of Directors passed a resolution on the need for continued efforts to 'green the urban landscape' in our Great Lakes and St. Lawrence communities. Based on recommendations from the Green CiTTS advisory committee, the Board approved the next priority area of the Green CiTTS program which will focus on sustainable urban water management in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin. The Mayors discussed other important topics that have arisen over the past six months in the Basin including; shale gas, pharmaceuticals, invasive species, and water withdrawals. Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the U.S. EPA Administrator on the Great Lakes, spoke to the mayors regarding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and status of the renegotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

### ***Quebec Announces St. Lawrence Plan***

On November 29th in Montreal, Québec's Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Mr. Pierre Arcand and Canada's Minister of Environment, Mr. Peter Kent, jointly announced the continuation of the Canada-Québec Agreement on the St. Lawrence. Entitled The St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011-2026, the agreement commits the governments of Canada and Québec to the conservation and protection of the St. Lawrence River for a period of 15 years. This announcement includes a joint investment of \$70 million over the next five years.

This agreement, originally initiated in 1988, will allow the implementation of an integrated management of the St. Lawrence, aiming to plan collectively for the protection and use of resources in a sustainable manner. This approach includes the creation of twelve regional roundtables as well as holding an annual event, a forum bringing together stakeholders and partners involved in the protection and enhancement of the St. Lawrence River.

The St. Lawrence Action Plan also ensures the continuation of the St. Lawrence monitoring program allowing an assessment of the River and decision making based on 21 environmental indicators. Additional information on the Action Plan, including documentation relative to its challenges and programs are available at [www.planstlaurent.qc.ca](http://www.planstlaurent.qc.ca)

## ***Ontario Proposes Great Lakes Protection Act***

The new Ontario government announced the development of a provincial Great Lakes Protection Act in the recent Speech from the Throne. The Cities Initiative is interested in gathering your ideas for what local governments would like to see in the proposed Act. As a first step, the Cities Initiative will be hosting a webinar for any interested members on “Options for Ontario’s Great Lakes Protection Act” on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at 9:30am central / 10:30 am eastern. A notice on the webinar will be sent out to members soon. Please contact Sarah Rang at [srang@enveei.com](mailto:srang@enveei.com) for more information or with questions.



## ***Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) in Final Stages***

The binational agreement on water quality in the Great Lakes is currently under renegotiation by the two federal governments and a final agreement may be announced in summer 2012. The new agreement is expected to be streamlined with fewer annexes, include two new annexes (one on habitat and species and one on climate change) and increase measures to promote government accountability and improve reporting. In addition, the GLWQA is expected to strengthen efforts to reduce nutrients, through additional monitoring efforts, and a new process to develop new load and concentrations targets for each lake on phosphorus, and allocation by country. The agreement may include a new focus on the nearshore, the water closest to the shore, and rollout improvements through enhanced Lakewide Management Committees. The Cities Initiative has been active in calling for greater municipal representation in all aspects of water quality management. For more information please see [www.binational.net](http://www.binational.net).

## ***Town of Ajax Declared a 'Blue Community'***

The Town of Ajax, Ontario was declared by its Town Council as a 'Blue Community' based on United Nations resolutions on water resources. The recognition is the result of the Town's recent efforts to declare water as a natural resource that belongs to no one and that all community members share the responsibility of caring for and managing. To achieve this status the Town banned the sale of bottled water in public facilities and at municipal events, recognized access to water as a human right, and committed to publicly financed, owned and operated water and wastewater services. Congratulations to the Town of Ajax!

## ***Ballast Water Management in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence***

The Cities Initiative continues to advocate for uniform, protective, and achievable ballast water standards for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Both the historical, cultural, and economic significance of shipping and the need to protect the resource from invasive species must be recognized and respected. With the recent draft vessel general permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the expected publication of U.S. Coast Guard regulations in 2012, the situation is getting more complex. This is especially the case because the states of New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin are all moving forward with requirements, as well. This makes the uniformity goal especially challenging. One positive development is that the strictly inspected and enforced ballast water exchange requirements seem to have reduced the rate of introductions of new invasive species, although it may be too early to tell how effective it is.

Because of the importance of the issue, the Cities Initiative will continue working with stakeholders to help find a solution that addresses the concerns of the maritime industry and provides the necessary protection for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.



## ***U.S. EPA Focuses on Revitalizing Local Waterfront Economies through Legacy Act***

The EPA has focused its attention on restoring Great Lake city's waterfronts and delisting Areas of Concern through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Legacy Act. The Legacy Act focuses on the accelerated clean-up of Areas of Concern across the Great Lakes. The U.S. EPA invites communities to apply for funding with nonfederal partners and sponsors to cover partial cost of the project. For more information on Legacy Act funding and delisting Great Lakes Areas of Concern, please visit [www.epa.gov/glla](http://www.epa.gov/glla).

## ***2012 Annual Meeting and Conference – Quebec City***

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Annual Meeting and Conference will be held at the Château Frontenac in Quebec City on June 26-28th, 2012. The annual meeting will be a great opportunity to meet with other mayors and dignitaries from around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence face-to-face as well as enjoy the beautiful city of Québec. The theme of this year's conference is 'Advancing Waterwise Cities/ Pour des villes aqua responsables.' Additional information on the conference will be forthcoming in the New Year so continue to look for notices in upcoming editions of Making Waves for information on registration, hotel and travel accommodations, and the preliminary agenda.