



Making Waves is the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's monthly newsletter. Read on to learn about our events and activities, along with important announcements and updates from our policy and program teams!

CEO Message

Dear Members and Partners,

Earlier this month, 28 mayors, councilors, and First Nations leaders from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region gathered in Washington, DC, for Great Lakes Day 2025. It was our largest delegation to date, amplifying our region's voices on critical issues such as the U.S.-Canada trade relationship, the U.S. federal funding freeze, and the importance of reauthorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for another five years.



It was truly inspiring to see elected officials from Canada, the United States, and First Nations working hand in hand to protect the socioeconomic and environmental integrity of our region. Together, we demonstrated that collaboration has the power to drive real, positive change for our communities.

Our delegation engaged with 20 Members of Congress and their staff, spanning both sides of the aisle. In addition, three U.S. mayors took our message directly to the White House, ensuring that leaders at the highest levels understand what's at stake for our region.

To keep the public informed, our delegation also held a press conference, generating widespread media coverage. You can view a comprehensive list of over 85 news stories that covered our efforts. We will also be sending each of you tools to communicate the threat of an escalating trade war between Canada and the United States for our region in the next few weeks. The tools will include online ads directed at your community's residents to make them aware of the economic threat of escalation to your specific region.

COME TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MILWAUKEE

Let's continue this momentum and keep working side by side to protect our waters. Join us in Milwaukee, WI, from May 14-16, 2025, as we gather for our Annual

Conference themed '[The Future of Fresh Water: Leading the Way in an Era of Scarcity.](#)'

Access to clean water is becoming one of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century as various trends – from skyrocketing demand and constrained public budgets to the persistent threats of pollution and floods – converge to endanger water supply, water quality, and ultimately, communities and people.

Against this backdrop, in Milwaukee we will discuss critical issues including strategies for reducing water consumption, protecting our source water, and enhancing resilience in an era of extreme weather and local flooding. We will also explore how to make progress on these issues in a constrained policy environment, where we face unprecedented challenges including budget cuts, mass layoffs, and threats to binational water governance.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region must continue to work as one to safeguard our resources and protect our communities. Join us in Milwaukee to build on our progress, share best practices, and unite our voices to guide the future of fresh water in our region. [Register before March 31st to save 25% with our Super Saver Rate.](#)

Warm regards,

Jonathan Altenberg
President and CEO

Upcoming Events

May 14-16, 2025, Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI.
SUPER SAVER - Non-Member Rate Ends March 31, 2025

[REGISTER NOW & SAVE](#)



Basin Bulletin

Program Updates

With a new \$1.7 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Cities Initiative will be supporting members in Dunkirk, NY; Grand Marais, MN; Sheboygan, WI; Toledo, OH; and Waukegan, IL to advance coastal resilience projects in 2025 and 2026. Stay tuned for project-specific updates! Through the Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts, a collaborative program with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Cities Initiative is supporting engineering and design assistance for an additional three projects in Bay City, MI; Kentwood, MI; and member city Superior, WI. This program will solicit new project ideas from U.S. cities across the entire basin this coming fall. Please contact Zoë Kuntze at zoe.kuntze@glslcities.org to indicate interest.

Policy Updates

The Cities Initiative released its 2025 federal priorities for the [United States](#) and [Canada](#). The Cities Initiative's top priority this year is reinforcing an integrated supply chain with Canada by opposing blanket 25 percent U.S. tariffs on Canadian imports.

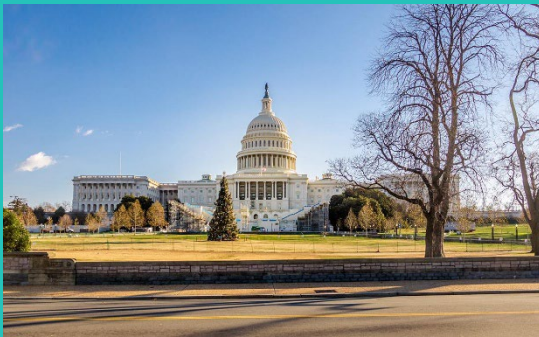
Additionally, in the United States, the Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. Congress to pass the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2025, as well as protect federal investments in alternative energy sources and water infrastructure in existing law.

Additionally, in Canada, the Cities Initiative encourages the Government of Canada to build upon federal investments in freshwater protection and safeguard communities, businesses, and housing through enhanced

federal investment in shoreline erosion infrastructure and other resilience programs.

Earlier this month, the Cities Initiative hosted a special virtual roundtable with leaders from the new Canada Water Agency, moderated by **Warden Andrea Matrosovs** of Grey County and Canadian co-chair of the Mayors Commission on Water Equity. **Véronique Hiriart-Baer, Director General**, and **Laura Cervoni, Director of Freshwater Policy**, presented on the Agency's mandate and funding programs for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. It was also an opportunity for members to ask questions of Agency staff and to share some of the challenges municipalities face when it comes to keeping source water clean and healthy.

Word on the Hills



Parliament Hill

Canada is off to the Polls with the Canada-US relationship as the election question.

Mark Carney officially became Prime Minister of Canada after being sworn in alongside his government on March 14th. One of his first orders was to call for snap federal elections to be held on April 28th after a five week campaign period. This came on the heels of Justin Trudeau's resignation on January 6th, and Carney's victory in the Liberal Party's leadership race on March 9th (with 86% of the votes by Liberal members).

Carney took on a Liberal Party whose popularity had plummeted after 10 years in power as they were trailing the Conservatives of Leader Pierre Poilievre by 20-25% nationally.

Carney's nomination and the surge of nationalism following the trade war and annexation threats by the Trump annexation seem however to have breathed a

new life into the Liberals who have made a surprise recovery and are now neck-and-neck with the conservatives in the polls.

The result of the election is a toss-up, both party leaders have been untested in a national election and the polls reveal public opinion to be highly volatile.

The likely outcomes are governments that will limit spending on environmental action, but that could be more prone to investments in key infrastructure for housing (water and wastewater) and economic transformation (ports, industry, etc.).

Capitol Hill

Earlier this month, the U.S. Congress approved and the President signed into law a **continuing resolution to maintain federal government funding** at Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding levels through September 30, 2025, the end of FY25. The House and Senate Committees on Appropriations have now begun work on FY26 funding bills

New Members

Mayor Eddie Melton **Gary, IN**

"I am proud to work closely with the Cities Initiative and with my colleagues across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region to bolster clean economic development here in Gary," said Mayor Eddie Melton of Gary, IN. "Encouraging clean industries to invest in our city creates jobs, drives sustainable economic growth, and makes our region more competitive."



[Read more](#)

Together, we're protecting the Great Lakes for generations to come. Stay connected and be a voice for our waters. Follow us on social media to stay engaged and take action!



