



2021 INITIATIVES U.S. AND CANADA

REPORT CARD

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has been active over the past year in promoting the environmental, social and economic vitality of our member cities. This report card reviews our progress in critical areas and grades us on our success in generating tangible achievements for cities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

Secured Substantial Resources for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities



The Cities Initiative has been an effective force in securing resources for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities. Key successes in Canada and the U.S. include:

Canada:

- \$1.4 billion over 12 years to Infrastructure Canada to rehabilitate stormwater systems and restore wetlands and shorelines;
- \$200 million for a new Natural Infrastructure Fund to support natural and hybrid infrastructure projects; and
- \$2.2 billion in additional funding for the new Canada Community-Building Fund (former Gas Tax) to address municipalities' infrastructure priorities.

United States:

- \$350 billion for states and cities to replace revenue lost due to the COVID pandemic;
- \$55 billion for water infrastructure, including \$15 billion to remove lead water lines, \$1 billion for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and \$1.5 billion to strengthen community resilience to natural disasters, contained in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill; and
- \$6 billion to strengthen resiliency in coastal communities and \$9.2 billion for water equity and the removal of lead water lines.

Strengthened Government Support for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Restoration and Protection



The Cities Initiative has advanced key priorities for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Key successes in Canada and the U.S. include:

Canada:

- Funding to create a new Canada Water Agency;
- Commitment to a new \$1 billion Freshwater Action Plan to restore and protect large lakes and rivers, including the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; and
- Progress toward the Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence 2020-2030 recommendations.

United States:

- Increased funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative;
- Authorization of the Brandon Road project to prevent invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes with reduced nonfederal cost share;
- Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency study adding a focus on Lake Ontario and Chicago shorelines; and
- A new FEMA program to establish revolving loan funds to help local governments reduce natural disaster risks, including shoreline erosion and flooding.

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Established a Program to Help Cities Respond to Climate Change and Strengthen Coastal Resilience



The Cities Initiative has developed a multifaceted program to help cities strengthen resilience in coastal areas and mitigate impacts from climate change, including:

- A [first-ever regional survey](#) documenting needs facing coastal cities, including [\\$2.1 billion in projected spending needs](#) in coming years;
- A [binational Mayors Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience](#) that is preparing recommendations to support resilience efforts among U.S. and Canadian mayors;
- [Technical support to help U.S. and Canadian cities build capacity](#) and develop solutions to threats along their shorelines; and
- [Collaboration with NOAA, FEMA, Environment and Climate Change Canada](#), among others, to respond to climate change and safeguard their shorelines.

Elevated Mayors' Voices in Washington and Ottawa



The Cities Initiative increased its relevance as a leading voice in Washington and Ottawa for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence mayors. In 2021:

- We [presented a comprehensive policy agenda to Congress and Parliament](#) and followed up with meetings with individual members, testimony before key committees, staff briefings, and correspondence to legislative leaders on key priorities;
- Mayors [met with cabinet members and agency directors](#);
- Our Annual General Meeting [featured remarks from multiple members of Parliament and Congress, ministers, and senior government officials](#); and
- Staff continued to work closely with the [Congressional Great Lakes Task Force](#) and the [new Parliamentary Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Task Force](#), and collaborated with regional organizations such as the [International Joint Commission, Great Lakes Commission, and Great Lakes Fishery Commission](#), as well as the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities.

Advanced Recommendations for Water Equity through the Mayors Commission on Water Equity



The Mayors Commission on Water Equity met through June 2021 and developed recommendations in four key areas:

- Lead contamination in drinking water, including a [centerpiece proposal for a \\$58 billion "Lead Safe Communities" fund](#) to support the removal of lead service lines and lead plumbing, fixtures, and paint in homes and schools;
- Water affordability;
- Water workforce development; and
- Urban flooding.

The Commission briefed Congress and advocated for funding in the infrastructure bill and Build Back Better Act to [remove all lead water lines nationally](#). With leadership from the mayors of Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Flint, the [Cities Initiative has been a leading voice calling for investments to strengthen equity in water services and modernize water infrastructure](#).

OVERALL GRADE: A-

We are pleased to report that the Cities Initiative is in a healthy position and we look forward to building on our accomplishments in 2022.