



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

March 5, 2026

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cities Initiative Members Urge the United States to Rebuild Trade Ties with Canada and Invest in Local Water Infrastructure during Washington Visit

Leaders called on the U.S. federal government to avoid any new tariffs or tariff increases on Canada and to reauthorize critical water-infrastructure programs benefiting member communities

Washington, DC – March 5, 2026 – Today, at the 2026 Great Lakes Day in Washington, DC, the Cities Initiative delegation called on the U.S. federal government to begin rebuilding trade relations with Canada and invest in local water infrastructure benefiting communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. Specifically, Cities Initiative members urged Washington to preserve and strengthen the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), avoid any new tariffs or tariff increases on Canada during the USMCA's 2026 Joint Review, and reauthorize the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds.

“The U.S.-Canada trade relationship has long been a pillar for the economic growth and prosperity of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region, which represents 50 percent of all Canada-U.S. bilateral trade and forms a US\$9.3T / C\$12.98T regional economy – the third-largest economy in the world,” said Paul Ainslie, Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto Councillor Scarborough-Guildwood. “That is why we are calling on the United States to remain party to the USMCA and avoid the imposition of any new tariffs or tariff increases in 2026 so that the Joint Review of this vital trade agreement can proceed in good faith.”

Additionally, Cities Initiative members advocated for the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and to provide \$3.25 billion for each per year to help communities nationwide modernize their water infrastructure. The Value of Water Campaign estimates that there are \$3.4 trillion in capital investments – \$1.8 trillion for wastewater and stormwater systems and \$1.6 trillion for drinking water – needed over the next 20 years, with lead service line replacement accounting for 4 percent of these capital investments needs.

During their visit, the Cities Initiative delegation met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill – including U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (WI); U.S. Senator Todd Young (IN); U.S. Senator Bernie Moreno (OH); U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI); and U.S. Senator Gary Peters (MI) – as well as senior officials at the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; U.S. Department of Transportation, including the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway

Development Corporation and Maritime Administration; and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The delegation included mayors and other leaders from both sides of the border, namely Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, WI; Mayor Ryan Sorenson of Sheboygan, WI; Mayor Cory Mason of Racine, WI; Mayor Marcus Muhammad of Benton Harbor, MI; Mayor Byron Nolen of Inkster, MI; Mayor Lew Conner of Two Harbors, MN; Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard of Mount Vernon, NY; Mayor Eddie Melton of Gary, IN; Executive Chris Ronayne of Cuyahoga County, OH; Mayor Jack Bradley of Lorain, OH; Mayor Sam Cunningham of Waukegan, IL; Legislator Michael Fish, Jr. of Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin; Mayor Mat Siscoe of St. Catharines, ON; Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie of Toronto, ON; Mayor Kevin Davis of Brantford, ON; Mayor Tom Mrakas of Aurora, ON; Mayor Iain Lovatt of Whitchurch-Stouffville, ON; Councillor Sean O'Meara of Halton Region, ON; Councillor Lauren Anderson of Chatham-Kent, ON; Councillor Peter Frost of Township of the Archipelago, ON; Chair Bonnie Clark, Warden of Peterborough County; Vice-Chair Nathan Townend, Warden of the County of Lennox and Addington; and Sheridan Graham, Secretary-Treasurer / CAO of Peterborough County.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of municipal and Indigenous government executives representing communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region who are working to promote economic prosperity and protect our fresh water for the benefit of current and future generations. With more than 425 member communities, the Cities Initiative is leading the way in advancing the environmental, economic, and social health of the region by addressing issues impacting its residents.

Media Contact

Christine Maydossian
Media Relations
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
media@glslcities.org
(416) 720-3466