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Green Cities Chart Sustainable Future for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence

Mayors showcase actions, pledge to expand sustainable practices

June 22, 2010 – Today, St. Catharines Mayor Brian McMullan joined mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, representing 13 million Americans and Canadians, in committing to adopt and expand green municipal practices, through the launch of the *Green CiTTS program*.

"Mayors understand that actions taken in our cities have a positive impact across the Great Lakes Basin," said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, founding United States Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "Today, cities are committing to expand and accelerate the implementation of innovative municipal projects and programs so that we can continue to lead the way on the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River."

The *Green CiTTS* (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program has four objectives:

- i. To Protect Water Resources and Coastal Areas
- ii. To Promote Low-Carbon Energy Generation and Consumption
- iii. To Adopt Green Land Use and Building Design, and
- iv. To Encourage Green Economic Development

Actions under the *Green CiTTS program* in its inaugural year will contribute to protecting water resources and coastal areas, by providing support for municipal actions to reduce storm water runoff. This year's program is supported by the Joyce Foundation, in collaboration with partners including America Rivers, and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities are already demonstrating their leadership. From Chicago's Alternative Fuels Project to Montreal's Sustainability Plan, from Grand Rapids' commitment to 100% renewable fuels to Milwaukee's Green Seams Program to reduce storm water run off, mayors make it their daily duty to create sustainable communities (see backgrounder and GLSLCI website for more details, www.glslicities.org/initiatives/greencities.cfm).

"With our many local actions taken to date, mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are already leading by example," said Denis Lapointe, mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and incoming chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. "We want to spread the word, and our green practices, throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin, to make this the most sustainable and prosperous region in the world."

An important aspect of the *Green CiTTS program* is the promotion and adoption of green technologies to support this effort and the creation of green jobs to stimulate local and regional economies. Cities around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence spend an estimated \$15 billion on environmental protection initiatives each year.

"Our cities have enormous investment and purchasing power that can be deployed to support the development of environmental technologies and training for green jobs", said Mayor Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee, host city of this year's Cities Initiative conference.

The Cities Initiative also announced the results from its Water Conservation Framework, now in its third year, and its Pharmaceuticals Framework, launched last year. Thirteen cities have collectively achieved a 13% reduction in water consumption- conserving approximately 87 billion gallons/ 329 billion litres of water, enough to fill 134,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. And over a 2 year period (2007,2008), eleven local governments

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collected a total of 685,000 lbs / 311,000 kg of pharmaceuticals and personal care products or the equivalent in weight of 18 hybrid city buses.

“On behalf of St. Catharines, I am proud to join the 72 mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in our pledge to transform the entire region towards a sustainable and prosperous future,” said Mayor Brian McMullan. “St. Catharines is already recognized for its innovative green practices and this new program will provide us with additional resources to strengthen our commitment to preserving the Great Lakes and improving the quality of life for residents of the region.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a bi-national coalition of over 70 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

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Contact:

Mayor Brian McMullan
905.688.5601, ext. 1540