

ONRAC Meeting

Sept. 24, 2024



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE

L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT



AGENDA

- Election Preparedness
 - Federal & Ontario
 - US
- Climate proof: Cost of extreme weather
- Cities Initiative updates
- Project submissions to ON government
- International Joint Commission
- Regional roundtable

ELECTION PREPAREDNESS

Context: Federal and Ontario Elections

- Federal: NDP has walked away from agreement with Liberals to support the government – an election could happen at any time
 - CPC/Poillievre majority government likely if polling holds
- Ontario: Government is strongly considering triggering an early election to beat the federal election cycle
 - PC/Ford majority government likely if current polling holds
 - Both elections likely to follow each other in the spring

Engagement Objectives

- Secure gains made around freshwater funding and water infrastructure
- Raise the profile of existing and emerging issues
- See commitments made by parties that reflect our priorities





ELECTION PREPAREDNESS

Engagement Opportunities

- Engagement around other organized events
 - Climate Proof Canada, ROMA, etc.
- Direct meetings with MPs and candidates – **organize regional meetings/engagements?**
- **Campaign to raise profile of key issues?** Example: council resolutions around climate adaptation, water infrastructure funding

Discussion

- What are the key issues you'd like to see us raise ahead of the elections?

ELECTION PREPAREDNESS - USA

Context

- Election on Nov. 5
- VP Harris has a slight edge over Donald Trump in most national polls
 - Battleground states do show some tight battles
 - Too close to call at this stage, but trends looking favourable for Harris
- Trump has mused about importing water from B.C. for California
 - Regardless of feasibility, the idea of importing water from Canada will only become more popular as regions of the U.S. become drier
- Trump has also threatened to impose a 10% tariff on all imports entering the U.S.



ELECTION PREPAREDNESS

Objectives

- Reduce the risk to the Canada-U.S. relationship
- Raise the profile of cross-border issues and value of Canada-US economic ties
- Reinforce the value of the GL Compact – restricting diversions

Engagement Opportunities

- Discussions with Cities Initiative US Members – promote cross-border collaboration (ex: Commissions, binational events)
- Participation in US events – Ex: Great Lakes Day in Washington, DC
- Host events around cross-border collaboration
- Work with Global Affairs Canada on engaging key contacts



CLIMATE PROOF: COST OF EXTREME WEATHER

Most Expensive summer in history for insurance claims

- Private sector costs are becoming public
 - Opportunity to showcase public sector costs
 - Combined public and private cost to draw political attention
- GC interest in examining extreme weather's economic impact
 - Opportunity to showcase the issue to all federal parties
 - Raise issue with provincial government and parties

Summer 2024 shatters records for severe weather damage: Over \$7 billion in insured losses from floods, fires and hailstorms



Opportunity

- Municipal and utility Data – Cost of extreme weather events in your community in 2024?
 - Create local content (*media release/ social media post*)
 - Create regional content (*ON & QC*)
 - Roll out data early Oct. – with "ask" later in the month

CITIES INITIATIVE UPDATES

Upcoming Events

- **Oct. 15:** Ontario Marine Council Luncheon (Toronto)
- **Oct. 18:** Presentation to Ducks Unlimited board (Toronto)
- **Oct. 21–25:** Roadshow w/ CEO
 - Kincardine/Goderich – Oct. 22
 - Meaford – Oct. 23
 - Chatham-Kent/WOWC – Oct. 24/25
- **Oct. 22:** Climate Proof Canada Summit (Ottawa)
- **Dec. 12-13:** Cities Initiative Midyear Meeting

Additional activities being planned:

- Dec.: Windsor/Essex–Detroit (Dec.)
- Dec.: Great Lakes Executive Committee (Toronto)
- Cornwall (with Eastern Ontario Mayors Caucus)
- Federal programming announcement with Conservation Ontario (Niagara CA, Hamilton CA, CA Halton, Ausable Bayfield CA, Maitland Valley CA, Lakehead CA)
- Nov./Dec.: Event with TRCA (Toronto)



CITIES INITIATIVE UPDATES

Renewal Season

- Annual contribution notices going out this week
- **Late Oct. – Early Nov.:** report card, invoices and annual conference registration will be sent
- FYI – we may follow up with you if a Member renewal is at risk

Project Submissions to ON gov't

- Two project proposals are in the works for consideration by the Ontario government:
 1. Product of a very positive meeting with Premier Ford this spring
 2. Great Lakes Local Action Fund opportunity – deadline this Thursday

Project Submissions to ON gov't

1. Economic Transformation Proposal

- Support the **development of the Cities Initiative's Action Plan** for Economic Transformation
- Support the **development of regional hubs** to adapt plans to local realities and advance implementation
- Create a **new funding program** targeted to municipalities – small-to-medium grants to fund environmental projects that will support the foundations of a blue-green economy



Project Submissions to ON gov't

2. Great Lakes Local Action Fund

- Support the launch of the Great Lakes Coastal Cleanup on World Rivers Day 2025
- For 2025, target one site per Great Lake and along the St. Lawrence River
- Still looking for Letters of Support, particularly for Lake Erie and the St. Lawrence River – need by Wednesday
- Deadline for submission, this Thursday





IJC WATER QUALITY FOCUS GROUPS

- IJC Water Quality Board's Horizons Project work group will be arranging a focus group for elected officials
- The Horizons project is a scenario-based approach to looking at the future of the Great Lakes region – from worst to best conditions relative to 2023





REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE

- Any positive developments in your municipality and/or region you'd like to share?

- Any issues in your municipality and/or region you'd like to share?