

# ONRAC Meeting

Dec. 16, 2024



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE**  
CITIES INITIATIVE

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

# AGENDA

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- 2025 Elections – recommendations and discussion
- US elections
- Cities Initiative 2025 events overview
- Regional Check-In
- Coastal Resilience programming in ON
  - Presentation by Bonnie Fox, Conservation Ontario
- Hybrid water quality monitoring pilot in Ontario
  - Presentation of Aguardian tool by Mehrdad Varedi, Waterlix

# ELECTION PREPAREDNESS

**Key objective:** Promote municipalities as key partners to achieve federal/provincial ambitions for housing, resilience and sustainable (economic) development. → **Same goal, tailored messaging**

- 1. Invest in water infrastructure to meet growing demand (for housing)**
- 2. Protect communities, businesses and homes through climate adaptation and coastal resilience;**
- 3. Continue investments in fresh water to preserve the attractiveness of our communities ;**
- 4. Promote local economic development while strengthening trade relationships with the U.S.**

# PROPOSED ACTIONS

## CITIES INITIATIVE ASKS |

### Protecting our communities, businesses and current housing stock through climate adaptation

#### Context:

- Any housing loss whether temporary or permanent due to extreme weather such as floods or wildfire puts that much more pressure on an already hot market.
- Insured losses amounted to 7 billion across the country in 2024, especially in the GTHA and Greater Montreal area due to flash floods.
- This has costed millions to municipalities affected, only to clear the debris and support their citizens in the immediate aftermath.
- Over 1.5 million Canadians live in high-risk flood areas. Each dollar invested stays in the community and brings about 12-15\$ in avoided losses.

#### Recommendations:

1. **Reinstate the federal funding for shoreline erosion** infrastructure that was canceled in 1997, as unanimously adopted by the TRAN committee. New Programming is a great start, and this fall over \$9M in new funding for Great Lakes was announced, but with thousands of homes and business at risk along Canadian Freshwater shorelines we need to work together.
2. Continued funding resilience efforts through a **2 billion\$ top up of the Disaster mitigation action fund (DMAF)** in 2025 and additional \$1 billion each year after that.
3. Continue the **Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program** to ensure evidence-based and sound prioritisation of government action.
4. Protecting Canadians' assets and wealth by offering a **publicly funded flood insurance** to protect Canadians, their homes and their capacity to get a mortgage.
5. Tap into **alternative funding models** by harnessing private capital by tasking government agencies to develop funding models for resilience involving private capital.

### Ensuring growth capacity for our communities and housing stock by investing in our water systems

#### Context:

Despite billions spent and pledged on municipal infrastructure, our water infrastructure is still ageing faster than it can be replaced or rebuilt. Limited drinking water capacity will limit capacity for new housing stock. Additionally, this limits our systems' resilience at a time of increased climate pressure.

- **Dec: Internal draft brief** includes proposed policies for all parties, contextual elements and figures
- **Dec/early Jan: Internal consultations** with Regional Committees and Mayors Commissions to confirm messaging
- **Jan/Feb: Outreach to national and local parties:**

### Cities Initiative Coordinated

Meetings with MPs that currently have a national profile within the party

### Individual mayors/councillors

Meetings with local candidates and MPs, using the briefing note



# TARGETS IN ONTARIO

Name	County	Comments	Member in the district
<b>Melissa Lantsman</b>	Conservative, ON Thornhill	Deputy Leader	<b>Vaughan</b>
<b>Leslyn Lewis</b>	Haldimand Norfolk	Shadow Minister for Infrastructure	(Port Dover, not a member)
<b>Philip Lawrence</b>	Northumberland– Peterborough South	Shadow Minister for Transport + TRAN and CAD-US committees	<b>Cobourg</b>
<b>Scott Aitchison</b>	Parry Sound– Muskoka	Shadow Minister for Housing	<b>The Archipelago</b>
<b>Dave Epp</b>	Chatham-Kent- Leamington	Foreign affairs and CAD-US Committees	<b>Chatham-Kent</b>
<b>Anita Anand</b>	Oakville	Minister of transport, President of the Treasury Board	<b>Oakville</b>
<b>Vance Badawey</b>	Niagara	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	<b>Welland, Port Colborne</b>
<b>Terry Duguid</b>	Winnipeg, MB	Special advisor to the PM on water issues.	N/A
<b>Brian Masse</b>	Windsor/Essex	Critic on Great Lakes	<b>Windsor</b>

# CLIMATE ADAPTATION / EROSION

**Key objective:** Fund preventive infrastructure at the local scale to protect the current housing stock, businesses and communities from extreme weather events.

1. **Reinstate the federal funding for shoreline erosion** infrastructure that was canceled in 1997.
2. Continued funding resilience efforts through a **2 G\$ top up of the Disaster mitigation action fund (DMAF)** in 2025 and additional 1 G\$ each year after that.
3. Continue and expand initiatives developing the knowledge around erosion in freshwater such as **Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program** to ensure the effectiveness and sound prioritisation of government action.
4. Protecting Canadians' assets and wealth by offering a **publicly funded flood insurance** to protect Canadians, their homes and their capacity to get a mortgage.
5. Tap into **alternative funding models** by harnessing private capital by tasking government agencies to develop funding models for resilience involving private capital.

# GROWTH CAPACITY AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Ensure **dedicated long-term, predictable funding for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure** that is not in competition with other needs. (through the Canada Community Building Fund / Gas tax fund, or through other programs)
2. Accounting for a **mix of shovel-ready and longer-term** projects so that the funding addresses actual needs on the ground, and not just those that fit the requirements.
3. **Mainstreaming resilience** in the new built infrastructure to build for the next generation and beyond.
4. Provide municipalities with **new revenue streams** to make these investments, through a new fiscal framework.

# SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

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1. **Clean water is paramount for economic activity**, tourism and traditional Canadian **leisure** such as fishing, hunting, and for the touristic and cabin communities.
2. Building upon the **historic freshwater investments and continuing the work on the ground**. Through a historic wave of freshwater investments, we have finally matched the US investments in terms of freshwater investments. **Dropping this commitment could fuel the arguments for lower standards down south.**
3. Monitoring and providing open access to **water quality data** in a user-friendly platform to ensure that municipalities and other stakeholders can take the most effective, evidence-based decisions.



# CITIES AS PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

1. Cities are key partners to foster local economic development and to implement the infrastructure needed for it.
2. As our roads are getting clogged and communities choked, we support alternatives to trucking, such as **short-sea-shipping and rail links across the region.**
3. Canadian cities members of the Cities Initiative can **leverage their network in the US and the CI platform** to share the benefits of an integrated economy in the region.

# US Elections

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- Cities Initiative is forming a transition team of mayors from both U.S. and Canada
- In discussion with GAC and CAD consulates in our region on ways to support
- Opportunity to leverage US activities and events to foster closer US-CAD relationships

# CITIES INITIATIVE 2025 EVENTS

- **Jan 18** – Cities Initiative, Climate Mayors & MRCTI reception – Washington, DC
- **Jan 21** – Coastal Resilience briefing – Toronto
- **Mar 5-7** – Great Lakes Days – Washington, DC
- **Apr 7** – Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Day on the Hill – Ottawa
- **May 14-16** – Cities Initiative Annual Conference – Milwaukee, WI
  - Registrations are open – reserve your spot by Dec. 31 to receive 25% discount
- **May 29-June 1 (Ottawa)** - FCM Annual conference and Tradeshow
- **Aug 17-20 (TBC)** – Fresh Water Happy Hour (AMO reception) – Ottawa
- **Oct (TBC)** – Climate Proof Summit – Ottawa
- **Oct/Nov (TBC)** – Ontario Regional Meeting – GTHA
- **Dec (TBC)** – Midyear Meeting – Virtual (TBC)



# 2025 Annual Conference

Leading in an era of skyrocketing demand for water globally, climate change impacts, and constrained public budgets

## At the conference, we'll explore:

- **Water Consumption** – How to reduce overconsumption through better stewardship
- **Water Protection** – How to develop community-led approaches to protect our water
- **Local Flooding** – How to combat flood risk and reduce burden on water infrastructure

**Registration now open!** Take advantage of Super Saver Rate

Super Saver (ends Dec. 31)	Early Bird (ends March 31)	Regular Rate
US\$800	US\$900	US\$1,100



THE FUTURE OF  
**FRESH  
WATER**

LEADING THE WAY  
IN AN ERA OF SCARCITY



# 2025 Regional Meeting

- We are looking for a willing municipality to host our regional meeting in the GTHA
  - Able to provide space for free/at a discount
  - No concerns with third-party sponsors of event
  - Aiming for 80-100 attendees
- Interest in doing an educational tour – preferably at or near meeting location
- Connect with Phil to discuss further





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# REGIONAL CHECK-IN

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



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# EXTERNAL PRESENTATIONS



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# Collaborating for Coastal Resilience



**Bonnie Fox**

Policy and Planning Director

Conservation Ontario

# Pilot: Hybrid Water Quality Monitoring

- Cities Initiative is exploring a collaborative in-kind partnership with Waterlix to leverage their Aguardian tool to remotely detect and monitor water pollution
- Recruit up to 3 ON member municipalities to participate in a pilot cohort
- Provide remote sensing of point and nonpoint source pollution that be leading to water quality issues
- Work collaboratively between all parties to identify and implement actions to address pollution and share learnings



# Pilot: Hybrid Water Quality Monitoring

## BENEFITS OF PILOT

- Opportunity to provide services to members at low/no-cost for Cities Initiative and participating members (aside from in-kind staff time)
- Would tie closely to Canada Water Agency priorities around Great Lakes pollution remediation and community-based science and engagement
- Potential to leverage additional tools for municipalities and other stakeholders to identify and address water pollution issues





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# **Pilot: Hybrid Water Quality Monitoring**

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**Mehrdad Varedi**

Founder

Waterlix