**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE MAYORS CONVENE IN SARNIA/LAMBTON COUNTY**
***Huron-Kinloss Mayor Elected Chair of Cities Initiative***

Sarnia, Ontario (June 19, 2015) – Mayors from nearly 40 local governments in Canada and the United States joined co-hosts Mayor Mike Bradley of Sarnia and Warden Bev MacDougall of Lambton County for the twelfth Annual Member Meeting and Conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative this week. The mayors selected a new Chair of the organization, endorsed Ohio, Ontario and Michigan's 40% by 2025 phosphorus reduction commitment to help reduce algal blooms, passed a number of important policy resolutions, and recognized cities for action on stormwater management and water conservation.

Mayor Mitch Twolan of Huron-Kinloss was elected as the 2015-2016 Chair of the organization. Mayor Denis Coderre of Montreal was elected Vice Chair and Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, NY was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

"I am optimistic for the year ahead," said Mayor Twolan. "Mayor Dickert helped build a great deal of momentum for the organization during his tenure as Chair and I look forward to continuing to advance the Cities Initiative mission."

At the Annual Meeting, the City of Racine received the ninth annual Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award. The award is given to a community with a population of less than 100,000 as seed money for a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence protection and restoration project that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects within the community and that can be used as a best practice in other municipalities. Racine received this year's Wege Award for the City's work to better manage stormwater and educate residents on the need to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Cities participating in the Cities Initiative *Water Conservation Framework* were also recognized for their outstanding work on water conservation. The City of Toronto was recognized for innovation on water conservation, and Ajax, Ontario; Town of the Blue Mountains, Ontario; and Grand Rapids, Michigan were recognized for progress on water conservation. Through the Framework, which was launched in 2007, cities have worked towards a 15 percent reduction below year 2000 water use levels by the year 2015. Participants have collectively achieved a 19 percent reduction, having conserved 123 billion gallons of water.

The 2015 Annual Member Meeting and Conference concluded with a presentation and invitation from Mayor Paul Dyster to the 2016 Cities Initiative meeting and conference in Niagara Falls, NY.

For more information on the proceedings from the 2015 meeting and conference, please visit http://glslcities.org/events/annual-meeting/.

*The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 114 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal, and first nation governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. For more information, please visit http://glslcities.org/.*

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