



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cities Initiative Receives Prestigious U.S. Water Prize for Groundbreaking Leadership to Expand Water Access

Awarded by the U.S. Water Alliance, the U.S. Water Prize celebrates outstanding achievement in the advancement of sustainable, integrated and inclusive solutions to water challenges in the United States

Chicago, IL – July 11, 2025 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is proud to announce that it has received the prestigious U.S. Water Prize in the nonprofit category for its groundbreaking leadership to expand equitable access to clean, safe and affordable water for all residents of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. Awarded by the U.S. Water Alliance, the U.S. Water Prize celebrates outstanding achievement in the advancement of sustainable, integrated and inclusive solutions to water challenges in the United States.

The organization was delighted to send a delegation to the 2025 One Water Summit in Pittsburgh, PA, to accept the award. The delegation included the U.S. Co-Chairs of the Mayors Commission on Water Access – Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, WI and Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard of Mount Vernon, NY – and Mayor Mat Siscoe of St. Catharines, ON, the organization’s Canadian Co-Chair.

“Since 2020, the Mayors Commission on Water Access has spearheaded advocacy, collaboration and education to advance equitable water access, including by expediting lead service line replacement across our region,” said Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, WI. “The Cities Initiative is proud to receive this award and will continue to work with members to reduce the risk of lead exposure via drinking water.”

There are an estimated 9.2 million lead service lines remaining in the United States, with a significant portion concentrated in our region. Milwaukee recently announced that it had replaced 10,000 lead service lines, a major milestone that the Cities Initiative hopes to replicate in other member communities through the Mayors Commission on Water Access and the Great Lakes Lead Pipes Partnership.

“The Cities Initiative is honored to receive this award for its leadership in expanding access to clean, safe and affordable water,” said Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard of Mount Vernon, NY. “We will continue to partner with the U.S. Water Alliance and others to close the water infrastructure investment gap, which will increase water access and strengthen our regional economy.”



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Water is the essence of life – and the foundation of healthy, resilient communities and secure, prosperous economies. However, investment continues to fall short, with more funding needed to close the \$91 billion water infrastructure investment gap in the United States. Properly investing in water infrastructure needs would generate \$220 billion in annual economic growth while creating 1.3 million new jobs, according to the Value of Water Campaign.

Through the Richard M. Daley Water Equity Community Award and the Turtle Island Scholarship, more than a dozen marginalized communities and First Nations and Tribes have joined the Cities Initiative in the last two years, strengthening our multinational coalition by engaging all communities in our organization's efforts to promote our economic prosperity and protect our fresh water.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence 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 in our communities and protect our fresh water for the benefit of current and future generations. With more than 300 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.

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