



Panel of Experts to Investigate Protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Stakeholder-Led Collaborative Strategy receives federal funding

Toronto, ON, Friday, October 26, 2018 – Today, an independent panel with experts from across the Canadian portion of the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River held its first meeting, launching an 18-month process to develop recommendations for all governments to safeguard Canada’s greatest reserve of freshwater and the St. Lawrence River estuary.

The Expert Panel will be co-chaired by two former provincial environmental commissioners of Ontario and Quebec respectively, Mr. Gord Miller and M. Jean Cinq-Mars. The independent panel will be advised by Indigenous organisations, stakeholders representing a cross section of industrial, agricultural, maritime, municipal, recreational, fishery and environmental interests, and other academic and scientific experts.

Environment and Climate Change Canada is providing \$400,000 to fund the initiative. The outcome of the process will be a Collaborative Strategy for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, proposing new and innovative approaches to protection efforts and better alignment of government science, programs and investments. The recommendations will be submitted to the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and shared with provincial counterparts, indigenous and municipal leaders, and the broader community in the Region.

The Collaborative Strategy, which has been championed and organized by the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#), the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#), [Freshwater Future Canada](#), [Stratégies Saint Laurent](#) and [Great Lakes Fishery Commission](#), will focus on four key challenges:

- 1) Climate Change
- 2) Toxics and other harmful pollutants
- 3) Nutrients
- 4) Beaches and bacteriological contaminants

The Strategy will proceed in two phases, beginning first with the Great Lakes and then concluding with the St. Lawrence River.

For more information on the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative, including a full list of Expert Panel members and Issue Table co-chairs, please go to:
www.westbrookpa.com/glsicollab/



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“Protecting our water, air and nature is a priority for our government. Millions of people depend on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence to sustain the economy, their livelihoods, their health and their wellbeing. This work is essential to protect the environment and grow the economy, and ensure a healthy and prosperous future for our kids and grandkids.”

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

“The Great Lakes, though grand in scale, are sensitive inland aquatic ecosystems. We will work with all those who depend on the lakes to find ways to better care for them.”

Gord Miller, Expert Panel Co-chair

“The St. Lawrence is part of the heritage and fabric of Quebec society. By finding solutions to the most pressing threats to this vital artery we will be better prepared for the future.”

Jean Cinq-Mars, Expert Panel Co-chair

“We hope many voices around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence regions will join this effort to identify restoration challenges and needs, increase investment, and strengthen protection of the inland waters on which so many of us, and so many species, depend.”

Bob Lambe, Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission

“The Great Lakes Regional Collaborative and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in the United States has shown what can be achieved when all levels of government work alongside industry, academia and the nonprofit sector to advance common environmental goals in the Great Lakes by leveraging programs and investments. It’s time Canadian governments and stakeholders come together like never before to find new ways of tackling a range of complex issues, especially the impacts of unabated climate change.”

Mark Fisher, CEO of the Council of the Great Lakes Region

“The Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative are pleased to be part of this Collaboration. We look forward to discussing new innovative approaches to protect these vital freshwater treasures, now and in the future.”

John Dickert, President and CEO, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

“This initiative presents a unique opportunity to mobilize diverse expertise to protect and restore the health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. It holds great potential for new partnerships among governments, environmental organizations and business and industry, and for increased investments to address the increasingly complex challenges we are facing across the region.”

Tony Maas, Manager of Strategy, Freshwater Future Canada



“The Collaborative will allow us to establish priorities to address transboundary challenges, to propose new initiatives that build on existing measures, as well as to identify additional financial resources to support essential programs like the Areas of Prime Concern (ZIP) Program along the St. Lawrence.”

Jacques Durocher, President, Stratégies Saint-Laurent

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