MAKING WAVES

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

# Mid-Year / U.S. Conference of Mayors

The Cities Initiative's Mid-Year Meeting was held in Washington D.C. on January 17-18. This year's meeting was set to occur right before the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 91st Winter Meeting so that our Board of Directors and other members could combine their trip plans.

Our Mid-Year Meeting focused on three primary external activities, including: 1) a congressional breakfast, 2) a meeting at the White House with key leadership focusing on environmental and infrastructure priorities and 3) an exclusive reception co-sponsored by the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative.

Three U.S. Members of Congress and a number of congressional staff attended our Mayors Breakfast on Capitol Hill. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL), Rep. Rashida Tlaib (MI) and Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI) all addressed our board. The board also had in-depth discussions with congressional staff from several offices on issues varying from invasive carp to water Infrastructure.

The board then traveled to the White House to meet with staff from the Executive Office of the President, including: the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation. Board members discussed the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Our mayors addressed the difficulty Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin communities have had in applying for and receiving grants from these laws and strategized on how the President can assist our communities. Our Canadian board members addressed international trade issues and cooperative efforts between Canada and the United States.

Our organization also co-sponsored an exclusive dinner and reception for basin mayors who were attending the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Winter Meeting. Speakers included: Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to the President and Infrastructure Coordinator; Ali Zaidi, Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor; Michael Connor, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works); and Arun Alexander, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Canadian Embassy. Over 40 mayors and staff from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and the Mississippi River Basin were in attendance.