

50th Anniversary of Great Lakes Water Agreement

In September, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hosted the Great Lakes Public Forum (GLPF). This event provided an opportunity for the Canadian and US governments to share progress on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) and commemorate the 50th anniversary of this landmark agreement.

Signed in 1972, the agreement identifies shared priorities and actions for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. The GLWQA was last updated in 2012 to reflect both countries' latest understanding of water quality and ecosystem health. Work by the parties is guided by 10 issue annexes: Areas of Concern; Lakewide Management; Chemicals of Mutual Concern; Nutrients; Discharges from Vessels; Aquatic Invasive Species; Habitat and Species; Groundwater; Climate Change Impacts; and Science. The parties also host Great Lakes Executive Committee meetings on a quarterly basis, which are open to observers to provide comments, including the Cities Initiative.

This landmark agreement has led to the accelerated remediation of some of the most contaminated areas of the Great Lakes, while setting a framework for ongoing binational cooperation. As we celebrate the GLWQA's golden anniversary, the Cities Initiative is calling on the US and Canadian government to strengthen their partnership with an eye on addressing the current challenges facing our waterways. We also call on the Canadian government to finally launch an arms-length Canada Water Agency and fully commit to the $1 billion in freshwater funding to implement the recommendations of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative's *Action Plan 2020-2030* to reduce nutrient and bacteriological contamination, renew shoreline and water management infrastructure and implement solutions to prevent and mitigate flooding and droughts.