

Letter from the Incoming Chair

Dear Members,

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for my appointment as Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank outgoing Chair Mike Vandersteen for his incredible leadership during what was certainly a very difficult period for the organization and for our cities. As Mayor of Sheboygan, and Chair of the Cities Initiative, Mike provided a steady hand in navigating our organization through the impacts of COVID-19, and providing strong insight into the issues facing our member communities.

I would also like to thank Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett (Vice-Chair) and Tiny Township Mayor George Cornell (Treasurer) for taking on positions on the Executive Committee of the Board.

As we emerge from the pandemic and begin a period of recovery, the Cities Initiative is well positioned to be a leading voice on matters that are important, the preservation and protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin.

Our members have been clear - we need funding to support water-based infrastructure renewal, additional funding to address the negative impacts of climate change like shoreline erosion and to accelerate our abilities to push back at climate change. We have also made it a focus to work towards water equity for all of our residents regardless of their race, economic status or ethnicity and ensure the benefits of our freshwater resources are shared equitably to everyone in our communities.

Moving forward, the Board and staff welcome your ideas and suggestions on all of the efforts of the Cities Initiative as we move forward. We have much work to do - but it is the strength of our binational network of mayors that will ensure we have an impact at all levels of government.

We look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming virtual AGM in August.

Mayor Walter Sendzik
Chair, The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative