



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2024

CONTACT

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR JOHNSON SIGNS BI-NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PLEDGE ON FIRST DAY OF QUÉBEC TRIP**

Mayor Johnson joined Mayor Valérie Plante of Montréal, QC, Mayor Bruno Marchand of Québec City, QC and Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, WI, in signing the historic pledge to transform the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin into a thriving blue-green economic corridor.

CHICAGO – Today, at the Cities Initiative Annual Conference in Montréal, Mayor Brandon Johnson joined the mayors of Montréal, Québec City, and Milwaukee in signing a historic bi-national [pledge](#) to transform the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin into a thriving blue-green economic corridor. This agreement exemplifies Mayor Johnson's commitment to sustainable economic development, climate justice, and investing in a blue and green economy.

"I am proud to join other mayors across North America in pledging to transform our basin into a thriving blue-green economic corridor," said **Mayor Johnson**. "Combating the decades of disinvestment and neglect in Chicago requires a bold new vision that prioritizes sustainable, inclusive and resilient economic development, safeguards our environment, and puts residents first with good-paying jobs and safe, clean and affordable water."

The 270-plus membership of the Cities Initiative approved a resolution earlier today to launch the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation, a collaboration between partners in government, industry, and the non-profit community to develop a ten-year plan to foster sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic development while protecting the basin's freshwater resources.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin contains nearly 84% of North America's surface freshwater which provides an underutilized competitive advantage for cities in the region. The bi-national agreement is part of a larger collaborative project to attract blue and green industries to the region for long-term sustainable economic development.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



“Blue-green economic transformation is at the heart of our work in Montréal, and I am happy to see this shared commitment rippling through the basin,” said **Mayor Plante of Montréal**, a Canadian Co-Chair of the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation, which was launched at this year’s Annual Conference. “I look forward to working together with my colleagues across the basin to better leverage our natural resources and shape a path for economic development that goes hand in hand with protecting our freshwater and maintaining our cities as vibrant places to live, work, play and invest.”

“This commitment is an outstanding example of the leadership role cities can play in shaping a path towards sustainable economic development and freshwater stewardship,” stated **Mayor Marchand of Québec City**. “We look forward to learning from our peers and promoting our best practices, so that our cities and the entire basin can better leverage one of our greatest assets – our freshwater resources – for sustainable economic development.”

“Signing this historic pledge is an important step for the economic transformation of our basin,” said **Mayor Johnson of Milwaukee**. “Milwaukee is already a leader in economic transformation and collaborating with other basin communities will be an additional asset as we seek to remain a global leader in freshwater innovation and green infrastructure.”

About the Cities Initiative’s 2024 Annual Conference

The Cities Initiative’s 2024 Annual Conference, ***Economic Transformation: Tapping into Water for Sustainable Prosperity***, is centered on the building blocks of a sustainable freshwater economy and offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to share ideas for successful local development strategies that attract innovative blue and green businesses and elevate local sustainability champions. The conference runs to Friday, the 17th of May at the Montreal Marriott Chateau Champlain.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments, led by more than 270 mayors and chief elected officers, working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is committed to stewarding the basin’s freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

###