



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

Media Release

May 13, 2026

Reeve Bert Liverance, along with all Cities Initiative Members, Adopts Declaration to Attract Water-Centered Industries and Expand Maritime Commerce

Parry Sound, ON – On May 6, at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative’s 2026 Annual Conference in Hamilton, ON, Members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative adopted a new declaration committing to working collaboratively to build the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor, from Lake Superior to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, over the next decade.

The Fresh Coast Economic Corridor is a binational economic development initiative focused on leveraging the region’s freshwater resources, maritime system, and skilled workforce to attract investment, grow water-centered industries, and strengthen communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

The Township of The Archipelago supports the declaration adopted by the Cities Initiative and commits to help build the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor.

The declaration, titled *“Building the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor by Attracting New, Water-Centered Industries and Expanding Maritime Commerce on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway,”* commits all Cities Initiative members to attracting 500,000 new water-centered industries and expanding maritime commerce on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway by 30 percent over the next decade while protecting the region’s precious freshwater resources.

“Clean water is one of the Township of The Archipelago’s most valuable natural assets, and protecting it is essential to the future of our communities, environment, and economy,” said Archipelago Reeve, Bert Liverance. “The Fresh Coast Economic Corridor presents an important opportunity to support sustainable economic growth while ensuring the long-term health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence watershed. The Archipelago is proud to support this declaration and work collaboratively with municipalities and partners across the region to protect our freshwater resources for future generations.”

Representing the third-largest economy in the world, the region generates approximately C\$12.72 trillion / US\$9.3 trillion in annual economic output and accounts for 30 percent of the combined economic activity of Canada and the United States, according to a 2025 report by BMO. Home to about 84 percent of North America’s surface fresh water, a skilled workforce, and the Seaway, the region is uniquely positioned to attract investment and support long-term economic growth, particularly as global water scarcity increases.

This effort builds on the Cities Initiative's *Economic Transformation Action Plan*, a 10-year roadmap to build the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor and position the regional economy to be among the fastest growing in North America.

"I am thrilled to welcome my colleagues from across our region to Hamilton this week, said Mayor Andrea Horwath of Hamilton, ON. "I look forward to working closely with them over the next decade to build the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor, which will bring thousands of new businesses and millions of new jobs to our communities."

While adopted by the Cities Initiative's full membership, the declaration was signed by several mayors representing the region's big cities, including Buffalo, NY; Cleveland, OH; Hamilton, ON; Laval, QC; London, ON; Milwaukee, WI; Montréal, QC; Québec City, QC; and Rochester, NY.

Reeve Bert Liverance, Councillor Scott Sheard and Councillor Dan MacLeod attended the Cities Initiative's Annual Conference, which took place May 6–8 in Hamilton under the theme "Fresh Coast Economic Corridor: Advancing Our Journey to Prosperity". The event brought together more than 300 municipal, First Nations and Tribal, federal, state, and provincial leaders, along with industry and environmental stakeholders, to advance the vision of a dynamic and thriving Fresh Coast Economic Corridor from Lake Superior to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence.

For more information about the conference, please visit: <https://glslcities.org/events/annual-meeting/annual-conference-hamilton-on-2026/>.

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