

Joint Press Release

A 15-YEAR COMMITMENT TO PROTECT THE ST. LAWRENCE

MONTREAL, Que. – November 29, 2011 – Today, Canada’s Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Peter Kent, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Honourable Steven Blaney, as well as the Quebec Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Mr. Pierre Arcand, announced a 15-year commitment to protect the St. Lawrence. This agreement, known as the St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011–2026, will continue the Canada-Quebec collaboration on the St. Lawrence that began back in 1988. The governments also confirmed a joint investment of \$70 million over five years.

“The Harper Government is balancing the need for a cleaner and healthier environment with protecting jobs and economic growth,” said Minister Kent. “In renewing the St. Lawrence Action Plan, we are improving water quality and ensuring the sustainable use of the Seaway for trade.”

“The health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem is of inestimable value to Quebec’s economy, and we must ensure its protection and sustainable development,” added Minister Blaney.

“For 23 years now, thanks to an approach based on partnership and cooperation, significant progress has been made in protecting, conserving and recovering the use of the St. Lawrence. It is essential to maintain our efforts and work hard to implement the integrated management of the river. It is with everyone’s participation, in particular that of the ZIP (Areas of Prime Concern) committees, that we will attain that goal,” said Minister Arcand.

The adoption of a cooperative, integrated-management approach will allow for the protection and sustainable use of the resources of the St. Lawrence. To this end, twelve regional issue tables will be created and an annual forum will bring together the players and users involved in issues related to the St. Lawrence.

The Action Plan also ensures the continuation of the State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program. This program uses 21 environmental indicators to report on the state of the St. Lawrence and provide decision support.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec are investing \$49 million and \$20.6 million respectively over the next five years to carry out the actions identified in the St. Lawrence Action Plan.

“This agreement shows again that it is important for the Quebec to maintain a close collaboration with the Government of Canada,” said the Quebec Minister responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs and the Canadian Francophonie, Mr. Yvon Vallières.

Details of the St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011–2016, as well as documentation on related issues and programs, are available on the Web, at www.planstlaurent.qc.ca.

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