



## **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2018 Resolutions for Consideration**

### **List of Proposed Resolutions:**

**Resolution 1:** Building Resilient Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities and Towns

**Resolution 2:** Taking Action to Halt Asian Carp and Other Aquatic Invasive Species

**Resolution 3:** A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Nutrient Pollution

**Resolution 4:** *Submitted by the City of Thunder Bay: North Harbour Mercury Contamination in Thunder Bay*



## **GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE**

### **ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**

#### **RESOLUTION 1 – 2018M**

##### **BUILDING RESILIENT GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES AND TOWNS**

**WHEREAS**, a global warming trend continues as demonstrated this past winter in the Arctic where temperatures increased more than 20 degrees Celsius above normal, and similar warmings (though not as high) have occurred in the Arctic four out of the five last winters; and

**WHEREAS**, more extreme weather events like flooding, intense rainstorms, high heat days, and drought are occurring more frequently around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin; and

**WHEREAS**, municipalities along the lower St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario experienced unprecedented flooding in the Spring of 2017 caused by record-breaking precipitation and sustained higher-than-normal inflows, and a number of municipalities around the basin have already experienced flooding events in the first six months of 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, the financial cost of extreme weather events, including costs for damage and repair of public infrastructure, loss of business, and loss of property, can be debilitating to municipalities and citizens, recent examples of which include an estimated cost of \$15.83 Million in rent and license fee abatements and repair and shoreline remediation work in Toronto after severe flooding in the Spring of 2017 at Toronto Island Park, and more than \$90 Million in flood damage in Bay, Gladwin, Isabella and Midland counties in Michigan due to severe flooding in the summer of 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, extreme weather events pose a significant risk to public safety in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities, and disproportionately so in disadvantaged communities and neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative commends the Government of Canada for making the threat of climate change a priority, particularly around the issue of adaptation and building resilience to the impacts of climate change through efforts like its Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Results and including funding support in the federal budget for solutions like green infrastructure, and its ongoing commitment to mitigating climate change through its participation in the Paris Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cities Initiative expresses concern over the US Administration's lack of commitment to providing leadership necessary to address the threat of climate change by stepping away from global efforts to address climate change and repeatedly reducing, eliminating, or threatening to eliminate federal funding support for programs and agencies that work to address the threats of climate change and help build resilience in our communities; and



**WHEREAS**, investment in drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure is essential to helping build resiliency and protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, and it has been estimated that the identified need for addressing drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure for the binational Great Lakes region is approximately \$13.6 Billion annually for the next 20 years.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative recognizes the need for all municipalities to engage in resiliency and long term infrastructure planning to better prepare for more extreme weather events, adapt to a changing global climate, and redevelop infrastructure to withstand these changes; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that since these extreme weather events strap local, provincial, state and federal resources and finances, the Cities Initiative encourages all orders of government to make municipal resiliency and long-term infrastructure planning and implementation a priority and ensure funding support for it; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative encourages federal, state and provincial governments to consider alternative funding streams for resiliency and long-term infrastructure planning and implementation support, like the Ontario and Quebec carbon cap and trade revenue, as well as new funding, financing and planning approaches like public/private partnerships, promoting integrated water management, and increasing the use of green infrastructure; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that while the Cities Initiative is supportive of ongoing investment by all orders of government in our drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, including low interest loan and financing programs like the US Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, and dedicated funding like Canada's Clean Water and Wastewater Fund, the Cities Initiative calls for long-term, dedicated and sustainable funding programs at the federal, provincial and state levels for municipal resiliency and long-term infrastructure planning and implementation, as well as for municipal drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls on the US Administration to prioritize resiliency and long-term infrastructure planning and implementation in any future infrastructure program so that our communities' infrastructure is redeveloped in a manner that is resilient to the impacts of climate change; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative will continue to find ways to support its member municipalities of all sizes as they work to build more resilient communities in the face of climate change through best practices exchange, identifying strategic partnerships, tools, resources, experts and funding support that can be of help, and continuing to advocate for a collaborative approach to resiliency and long-term infrastructure planning and implementation by all orders of government.



## **GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE**

### **ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**

#### **RESOLUTION 2 – 2018M**

##### **TAKING ACTION TO HALT ASIAN CARP AND OTHER AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES**

**WHEREAS**, the threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS), particularly Asian carp, including Silver, Bighead, and Grass carp, to the biodiversity of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system, the \$5.8 trillion regional economy, and the \$7 billion commercial, recreational and tribal fishery, continues to loom and intensify, with a Silver carp having been caught beyond the electric barrier, nine miles from Lake Michigan in June 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has taken a consistent position in past resolutions outlining the danger of AIS, particularly Asian carp, to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system, and called for urgency and action to address the threat; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cities Initiative, in partnership with the Great Lakes Commission, completed a report in 2012, *Restoring the Natural Divide*, demonstrating the feasibility of physical separation and restoring the natural divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, and the Cities Initiative has consistently advocated for full physical separation as the most effective way to halt the spread of Asian carp; and

**WHEREAS**, action to block the potential pathways for AIS, especially Asian carp, particularly through the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS), has been too slow and mired in politics at times; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) in January 2014, outlining eight alternatives approaches to reducing the risk of AIS moving between the basins, confirming that physical separation is the most effective, and the USACE is nearing completion of an evaluation of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet, Illinois, an ideal single control point for AIS in the CAWS; and

**WHEREAS**, the USACE released a study on Brandon Road Lock and Dam in September 2017 that identifies the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP), a set of measures to monitor and control the movement of AIS at Brandon Road including water jets, a flushing lock, noise systems, electric barriers, and an engineered approach channel, as the approach that maximizes the effectiveness of preventing upstream transfer of AIS while minimizing impacts, and anticipates the cost to be approximately \$275 million; and

**WHEREAS**, the agency decision, feasibility study, Senior Leader's Review, and a Chief of Engineers report must still be completed on the Brandon Road Lock and Dam evaluation, anticipated to be done by August 2019; and



**WHEREAS**, per the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, a federal cost-share must be established for a project like additional interim measures at Brandon Road Lock and Dam, in this case requiring that a local, non-federal partner cover approximately 35% of the project cost.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative urges the US ACE to complete its agency decision, feasibility analysis, Senior Leader's Review, and Chief of Engineer's Report with the utmost urgency, no later than February 2019 but sooner than that if possible

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative emphasizes that Asian carp are a significant threat to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, and calls on the US Congress to swiftly authorize and fund the full \$275 Million needed to start construction on the TSP at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the threat of Asian carp is of national significance and as such, the need for a local partner per the WRDA requirement should be waived and the TSP should be fully funded by the US Federal government; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative maintains that the TSP at Brandon Road Lock and Dam is a necessary first phase in a two-phased approach to halt the transfer of AIS between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that while the Cities Initiative welcomes the TSP as a significant advancement in AIS control measures, it remains that full physical separation of the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes Basin is the second critical phase needed to effectively reduce the risk of AIS transfers in both directions and keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system.



## **GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE**

### **ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**

#### **RESOLUTION 3 – 2018M**

##### **A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ADDRESSING NUTRIENT POLLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, harmful algal blooms (HABs) and nuisance algae continue to plague Lake Erie and threaten the more than 10 million people that depend on the Lake for their drinking water; and

**WHEREAS**, the HAB in Lake Erie in the summer of 2017, ranked as the third largest on record, reaching 1000 square miles from Toledo to the Ontario shoreline, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, HABs pose a threat to drinking water due to the development of a toxin called microcystin, for which US EPA and Health Canada have developed guidelines for drinking water; and

**WHEREAS**, HABs also cause damage to the lake ecosystem and fisheries, disrupt tourism and recreation, foul waterfronts, damage water infrastructure, close beaches, and according to the US EPA, the annual cost of freshwater degraded by HABs is \$64 million in additional drinking water treatment, loss of recreational usage, and a decrease in waterfront real estate values; and

**WHEREAS**, Canada and the United States have committed to a 40% reduction in Phosphorus below year 2008 levels, and through the Western Lake Erie Collaborative, Ohio, Michigan and Ontario committed to a 40% phosphorus reduction by 2025, with an aspirational goal of 20% by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, as called for in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Canada (in partnership with Ontario) and the United States each released a domestic action plan in early 2018 outlining how the governments plan to achieve the 40% targets, and Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Pennsylvania each have developed strategies as well; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative continues to work with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other partners on the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative (PRC), an effort to reduce phosphorus loss from farmlands into the Thames River and ultimately Lake Erie; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lac St. Pierre Mayors Caucus was established in 2017, led by Mayor Serge Peloquin of Sorel-Tracy and Mayor Yves Lévesque of Trois-Rivières to address the issue of nutrients entering Lac St. Pierre and help stimulate action by all orders of government and stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lac St. Pierre Mayors Caucus actively supports the Lac St. Pierre Regional Roundtable Action Plan for farming-wildlife cohabitation in the littoral zone; and





**WHEREAS**, the Cities Initiative has been working in the United States to forge partnerships and collaboration in the Maumee River watershed on the issue of nutrients, and is working towards bringing parties together to implement action on the ground on the issue of nutrients.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative commends the Governments of Ontario, Michigan and Ohio for their commitment to reach 40% phosphorus reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin by 2025;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that while the domestic action plans and state action plans are a step in the right direction, the Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian and US Federal Governments to commit to reaching 40% phosphorus reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin by 2025, provide a plan that clearly outlines the combination of actions that will achieve this reduction, and provide sufficient funding, accountability, and technical support to achieve this target; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative will continue to support the work of the Lac St. Pierre Mayors Caucus and Regional Roundtable and requests that the governments adequately finance the restoration of priority habitats, including wildlife habitats, and the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative will continue to work with partners including municipalities, First Nations and Tribes, agriculture, environmental groups, conservation groups, business and industry, foundations, and the public on collaborative and coordinated action to reduce nutrients entering waterways in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence basin, with a priority on the western basin of Lake Erie, seeking ideas and inspiration from successful efforts in other regions, including the Chesapeake Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the Everglades.



### **Additional Member Submitted Resolution**

The following resolution is being brought to the Annual Meeting by the City of Thunder Bay. The resolution was not advanced by the Operations Committee and Board due to its locally-specific nature but can be considered by the membership at the Annual Meeting if 2/3 of the members present vote to consider it.





**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE**

**ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**

**RESOLUTION 4 – 2018M**

**NORTH HARBOUR MERCURY CONTAMINATION IN THUNDER BAY**

**Submitted by: City of Thunder Bay**

**WHEREAS**, under the 1987 Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, 17 Areas of Concern (AOC's) are identified on the Canadian side requiring significant remediation; and

**WHEREAS**, over the last 30 years, five of these 17 AOCs have been delisted or are in recovery, seven are expected to be completed and/or delisted by 2020, and five require work beyond 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, of the AOC's that still have substantial remediation work to do beyond 2020, only Thunder Bay has no clear plan or federal investment to complete the necessary clean-up work; and

**WHEREAS**, a mercury contaminated site of about 400,000 cubic meters of organic sediment deposited over 90 years of mill operations persists in the North Harbour of Thunder Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, this sediment is subsequently contaminated with mercury in concentrations that range from 2 to 11 ppm at the surface of the sediment to 21 ppm at depth and ranging in thickness from 40 to 380 centimeters and covering an area of about 22 hectares; and

**WHEREAS**, a study commissioned in 2014 to provide options for mitigating the mercury contamination in the North Harbor was carried out and since the study no further progress has been made by provincial or federal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, at a Remedial Action Plan meeting held on April 18, 2018 with representatives from Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Thunder Bay Port Authority and Lakehead University, it was recommended that the North Harbour Steering Committee including land owners reconvene to address the North Harbour AOC's.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls upon the federal government, Ministries of Transport and Environment and Climate Change and the Thunder Bay Port Authority to cooperate to identify a project lead or co-lead; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls on the federal government, Ministries of Transport and Environment and Climate Change, and the Thunder Bay Port Authority to reconvene the North Harbour Steering Committee, including land owners, to work collaboratively to resolve the North Harbour AOC's, and



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Collaborative Strategy, of which the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a part, be requested to consider federal investments and actions in AOC's including Thunder Bay, as part of its strategic review of federal programs and investments in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Cities Initiative calls upon the Federal government, the Thunder Bay Port Authority, the Provincial Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, along with former industrial owners of the adjacent mill site, to allocate funding and implement remedial action in a timely manner

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**SUBJECT: North Harbour Mercury Contamination in Thunder Bay**

**SUMMARY:**

The North Harbour location is adjacent to a former paper mill near Current River mouth and the Shipyards. The area of highest contamination is in the water and is approximately 55 acres or 22 hectares in size. Mercury is mixed with a thick layer of pulpy fibre suspended in harbour water. There is approximately 400,000 cubic metres of contaminated material. Cleaning up the contaminated sediment is required to improve environmental quality in the North Harbour and to assist in removing Thunder Bay from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

The City of Thunder Bay (the City) requests the St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to support the request from the City to have the Province of Ontario, Government of Canada and Thunder Bay Port Authority to provide funding and work with adjacent landowners to mitigate the mercury contamination in the North Harbour and therefore delist Thunder Bay as an Area of Concern (AOC).

### BACKGROUND

In 1987, under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between Canada and the United States, 43 AOC's were identified as having experienced significant levels of environmental harm. Of these 43 areas of concern, 12 are located in Canada and ten are shared bi-nationally. Once identified, Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) were developed for each AOC. The purpose was to restore water quality and beneficial uses of the ecosystem by cleaning up severely contaminated and degraded locations around the Great Lakes.

Thunder Bay North Harbour is identified as an AOC. On the bottom of the North Harbour area there is approximately 400,000 cubic meters of contaminated sediment, up to four meters thick in places, covering an area of approximately 22 hectares or 54 acres. This historic effluent discharge is a result of a former paper mill depositing rich organic sediment into the waters for over 90 years of mill operations (Franz Environmental Report, 2013).<sup>i</sup> The sediment is contaminated with mercury in concentrations up to 41 ppm, or 20 times the Provincial Severe Effect Level. Test results reveal the water also contains contaminants including resin acids and copper.

The Public Advisory Committee to the Thunder Bay Remedial Action Plan has been advocating for several years for the provincial and federal governments to take action on this issue. Collaboration is needed by the landowner, Transport Canada and the Thunder Bay Port Authority in order to proceed with clean-up efforts.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The City recommends the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to call upon the Province of Ontario and Government of Canada, the Thunder Bay Port Authority along with former industrial owners of the adjacent mill site to allocate funding to clean up the mercury contamination in the North Harbour and therefore delist Thunder Bay as an AOC.

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<sup>i</sup> North Harbour Site Specific Risk Assessment with Sediment Management Strategy and NCSCS Classification