



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

RESOLUTION 1 – 2011M

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
RIVER BASIN

WHEREAS, stormwater has been recognized by the International Joint Commission, and Canadian and US regulatory authorities as a leading non-point source of pollutants to nearshore water quality in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, greater urban intensification can be anticipated to result in more untreated stormwater from population growth entering our waterways, further adversely impacting nearshore water quality; and

WHEREAS, more intense and more frequent storms due to climate change will increasingly overwhelm current municipal stormwater systems and wastewater treatment facilities, seriously damaging municipal infrastructure and public property, and at times resulting in flooding situations that are a danger to public safety; and

WHEREAS, stormwater regulations and standards vary widely across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin, resulting in significant discrepancies in stormwater activities, and financing of these activities; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for stormwater management is decentralized, shared across multiple municipal departments and across residential, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors; and

WHEREAS, stormwater management still commonly does not have a dedicated revenue stream as does water and wastewater management; and

WHEREAS, investing in stormwater measures provides environmental, social and economic benefits over the long term; and

WHEREAS, municipalities find it challenging to measure progress in water quality improvements arising from improved stormwater controls primarily in the absence of study of baseline and subsequent environmental conditions; and



WHEREAS, an increasing number of municipalities are adopting stormwater management plans integrating ‘green infrastructure’, using on-site natural attenuation where soil conditions are conducive to reduce the amount of stormwater to be collected or otherwise managed through costly grey infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, for the above reasons, the Cities Initiative has designated stormwater management as its first priority area under its Green CiTTS (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program, and has surveyed its members on their current stormwater practices, and has developed a report and recommendations on stormwater practices across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin.

- a. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative encourage and support its members through training, pilot projects, research, web-based resource and the exchange of best practices, to continuously improve their stormwater practices by developing a comprehensive corporate-wide stormwater plan for the purpose of reducing and remediating stormwater using a centralized management approach, which
 - a. Defines explicit roles and responsibilities for municipal departments involved in stormwater management;
 - b. Provides training on water quality generally and more specifically stormwater quality and quantity standards and analyses for officials responsible for stormwater management (e.g. public works, building and planning departments), and in ICI sectors;
 - c. Implements education/outreach programs and/or regulation of ICI and residential sector stormwater activities;
 - d. Requires practical but effective stormwater management components in new and infill/intensification/retrofit development;
 - e. Establishes implementable maintenance and inspection programs for existing and new stormwater infrastructure eg. retention ponds;
 - f. Establish and maintains a dedicated budget for stormwater activities and a stable, sustainable source of funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members of the Cities Initiative endeavor to reduce the impact of stormwater on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and their tributaries by:

- a. Setting water quality goals and regularly monitoring and reporting on the performance of stormwater systems;
- b. Improving monitoring of stormwater impacts on water quality in receiving waters and reporting on the findings annually;



- c. Promoting pilot projects on stormwater quality in communities throughout the Great Lakes Basin in conjunctions with senior governments and local academic institutions (e.g. universities);
- d. Improving stormwater quality through promotion of and implementation of pollution prevention plans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members of the Cities Initiative be encouraged, and be provided support from all levels of government, to prepare for the impact of changing climatic conditions as applies to stormwater by:

- a. Preparing climate change vulnerability assessments;
- b. Gathering existing precipitation and climate change modelling data for your local region;
- c. Revising infrastructure design criteria and intensity duration frequency curves;
- d. Developing a Master Plan with short, medium and long-term goals to address flood risk areas associated with the Great Lakes shoreline and tributaries.
- e. Developing emergency response plans associated with anticipated flooding in flood plains and other low-lying or vulnerable areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members of the Cities Initiative endeavor to integrate Low Impact Development (L.I.D.) approaches to stormwater management throughout communities, including areas of planned high density urbanization, and remove barriers that obstruct the application of green infrastructure.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Cities Initiative and its members seek support from federal, provincial, state authorities

- a. For a basin-wide public awareness campaign linking the effect of on-site stormwater management and runoff on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence water quality;
- b. To advance stormwater management through stormwater framework guidance materials, guidance and incentives for climate change adaptation, the removal of barriers to the application of new stormwater technologies or practices;
- c. To advance water quality monitoring, reporting and analyses associated with stormwater through coordination and sharing of data and reports collected at the Federal, Provincial, state, regional and local levels with a view to conducting comprehensive nearshore water quality studies and seeking solutions that will bring about desired improvements;
- d. to advance commitments or set goals with respect to stormwater to improve nearshore water quality, in agreements currently under renegotiation including the St. Lawrence



Plan, the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, and the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;

- e. to recognize that stormwater management lacks funding and therefore municipalities request federal, provincial and state authorities to increase and strengthen funding for stormwater management;
- f. Seek funding from government sources, including Environment Canada's Great Lakes Sustainability Fund and the US Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, for municipal stormwater demonstration projects and the undertaking and analysis of nearshore water quality study results; and encourage more dedicated funding for green infrastructure through green infrastructure set asides in Canada's Strategic Infrastructure Fund and the U.S. Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

Signed this 16th day of June, 2011

Brian McMullan, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of St. Catharines