

2002 MAYORS' RESOLUTION ON GREAT LAKES PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes are the world's largest source of surface freshwater and are essential to the quality of life and economic vitality of the cities, villages, townships, and counties along the shores and in the surrounding watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes support countless recreational, commercial, tourism, and cultural activities for basin residents and visitors; drive economic development and improve the economic value of shoreline communities; support critical aquatic and coastal ecosystems; provide fresh drinking water for millions of people; and support agricultural and industrial activities; and

WHEREAS, on a day-to-day basis, the Great Lakes pose challenges -- such as fish advisories, beach closings, invasive species, stormwater management, and diminished open space -- for mayors, county executives, and other municipal leaders; and

WHEREAS, a variety of Great Lakes efforts have been underway for some time, these efforts are not well-coordinated with each other and do not adequately address the long-term protection and restoration of the Great Lakes as a vital resource. Failure to adequately protect, improve, and preserve the Great Lakes could jeopardize public and environmental health as well as the economic prosperity of all Great Lakes communities; and

WHEREAS, while responsibility for the Great Lakes is shared by two national governments, eight states, two provinces, forty tribes and First Nations, it is municipal leaders who are on the front line, making decisions and investments every day to protect this natural resource; and

WHEREAS, basin-wide protection and restoration are essential to the region's economy. Shipping, tourism, and a wealth of other industries depend upon a clean and sustainable environment. Enhancing the region's economic prospects, therefore, requires aggressive environmental actions. It also demands outreach so that citizens appreciate how their actions affect the Great Lakes. Likewise, a clean and sustainable environment is possible only with the ingenuity and commitment of responsible public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS, although data on some Great Lakes environmental indicators have improved substantially over the past decade, more is needed if actions are to be targeted and effective. Great Lakes municipal leaders must be supported with funding to investigate these scientific challenges, clarify and measure success of projects undertaken, and obtain real-time data on which to base daily decisions that affect this water resource; and

WHEREAS, Mayors throughout the Great Lakes region have agreed to establish a Great Lakes Cities Initiative, under which Mayors and other elected municipal leaders will work jointly to advance the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes ecosystem; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, (the city/township/village/county of _____) calls upon the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament to appropriate funds for the development, by an independent panel of science and policy experts that includes municipal officials, of a detailed plan for Great Lakes protection and restoration. The Plan would serve as a blueprint to guide agreed-upon future legislative and appropriations activities that restore and protect the Great Lakes ecosystem.