GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE

RESOLUTION 6 –2006M

WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, Section 7209 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of December 17, 2004 calls on the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to develop and implement a plan to require a passport or other document or combination of documents deemed to be sufficient to denote identity and citizenship for all travel into the United States by United States citizens and categories of individuals for whom documentation requirements have previously been waived;

WHEREAS, securing land, air, and sea ports of entry is absolutely critical;

WHEREAS, Canada and the United States have a unique relationship characterized by the world’s longest undefended border;

WHEREAS, more than 300,000 people from both countries cross the border every day to work, shop, and visit family and friends;

WHEREAS, cross-border communities of Buffalo-Niagara and Detroit-Windsor are tightly knit both socially and economically and residents shop, attend school or church, and events on both sides of the border;

WHEREAS, only 23% of United States citizens and 40 % of Canadians hold passports;

WHEREAS, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) will require all Canadian and United States citizens to have a passport to enter the United States by 2008;

WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that a passport requirement is likely to reduce travel demand between Canada and United States to the detriment of both countries’ tourist industries and economies;

WHEREAS, there is little evidence that the availability of a new form of identification such as the proposed PASS card will have substantially smaller result in curtailing travel demand than a passport requirement;
WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security has advised that there
probably is insufficient time to complete the development and pilot testing of alternative
secure identification options based on the enhancing existing forms of identification
within the proposed timeframe for implementing the new documentation requirements of
December 31, 2006 for individuals traveling by air and sea and December 31, 2007 for
individuals traveling by land;

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that the public in both Canada and the United
States is confused about the timing of the proposed implementation of the new
regulations, many believing that they already require a passport to enter or re-enter the
United States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St.
Lawrence Cities Initiative advise the Governments of Canada and the United States that it
is deeply concerned about the risk to the economic health of communities in both the
United States and Canada associated with the implementation of the Western Hemisphere
Travel Initiative;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities
Initiative request that the Government of Canada formally request the Government of the
United States to delay the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities
Initiative request the Government of the United States to delay implementation of the
Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and that the United States work with Canada to
develop solutions that provide for a secure border while facilitating trade and travel;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Great Lakes and St.
Lawrence Cities Initiative be encouraged to attend the Mayor’s Summit in Windsor on
July 20, 2006 to address the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

Signed this 23rd day of June, 2006

David Miller, Chair
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David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Chair
Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, Promoting Chair