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

RESOLUTION 15 - 2007M

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 U.S. citizens and categories of individuals for whom documentation requirements have previously been waived; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, only 23% of U.S. citizens and 40% of Canadians hold passports; and

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 June 1, 2009, or until three months after the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security have jointly certified that specific security criteria for travel documents have been established; and

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; and
WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security is working with Washington State and with the Province of British Columbia to develop and carry out pilot testing of alternative secure identification options such as enhanced driver’s licenses to determine the feasibility of enhancing existing forms of identification as valid border-crossing documents under the WHTI; and

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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative request the Government of the United States to work with border cities and border states, in particular the States of Michigan and New York, and with Canada to develop solutions related to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative that provide for a secure border while facilitating trade and travel; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative are convinced that: transparent Canada-United States consultations on WHTI implementation are needed; it is necessary to consider commonly held documents as alternatives to a passport, for example, drivers’ licenses; more information on the economic impact of WHTI is needed; the United States and Canada need to develop a comprehensive and well-planned communication, marketing and distribution plan to explain WHTI requirements.

Signed this 12th day of July, 2007

[Signature]
Gary Becker, Chair
Mayor of Racine
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative