



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

RESOLUTION 1 - 2008M

MERCURY CONTAMINATION IN THE GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence serve as a source of drinking water, a place for recreation and enjoyment, such as sport fishing, and a means of livelihood for many commercial fishermen across the Basin; and

WHEREAS, widespread contamination of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence from a wide variety of toxic pollutants has occurred over the years; and

WHEREAS, among the many toxic contaminants, some of the greatest concern is over mercury pollution because of the serious threats it poses to human and ecological health; and

WHEREAS, exposure to mercury is of special concern to children, women of child bearing age, and people who subsist on fish as a large part of their diet, such as Native American and First Nation peoples; and

WHEREAS, mercury contamination in fish is one of the major reasons for advisories against eating certain sizes, types, and numbers of fish in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, the United States and Canadian Binational Toxics Strategy of 1997 includes special emphasis on mercury reduction and a number of actions have been implemented to advance the goals of the strategy; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy highlights mercury as one of the toxic pollutants of significant concern that requires priority consideration for action; and

WHEREAS, a workgroup with federal, state, local, and tribal representatives has completed a mercury phase down strategy that presents a series of recommendations and implementation actions for state and local governments as well as individuals to remove mercury in products and waste from the Great Lakes basin; and

WHEREAS, federal, provincial, local, and first nation governments in Canada have identified mercury as a priority pollutant of concern and have implemented a number of actions to reduce the release of mercury to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, community mercury collection programs are an effective way for local governments to help address the issue of mercury contamination of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; and



WHEREAS, coal-powered electricity generation is a major source of mercury contamination; and

WHEREAS, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment endorsed the Canada-wide Standards in 2006 that set provincial caps on mercury emissions from existing coal-fired electric generation plants, setting a 60% national capture of mercury from coal burned by 2010 from 2003/04 mercury levels, but these standards are not binding; and

WHEREAS, the United States federally regulates mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants in the Clean Air Act and, in a U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruling in 2008 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was given until 2010 to develop mercury emissions standards for existing coal-fired power plants; and

WHEREAS, mercury continues to be present at unacceptable levels in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and further action is necessary to get additional reductions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that cities and other local units of government support the goals of the United States and Canadian Binational Toxics Strategy and will take actions wherever possible to help implement and accelerate the actions anticipated under the Strategy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative will continue to work with the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy team to encourage the implementation of the “Mercury in Products Phase Down Strategy” by communities throughout the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region to reduce mercury in products and in waste disposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative will work with its members and other participating local governments to implement those elements of the strategy that are appropriate for them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative will urge the United States Environmental Protection Agency to develop mercury emissions standards for coal-fired power plants within the two-year framework; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian provincial governments and United States federal government to require a 90% reduction in mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 2015 without a cap and trade program.

Signed this 17th day of July, 2008

Lynn Peterson, Chair
Mayor of Thunder Bay
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative