WHEREAS, Great Lakes mayors recognize that ports are gateways to world trade and critical components in North America’s economic recovery; and

WHEREAS, citizens of the United States, Canada and the world rely on ports in this region to move cargo efficiently in and out of North America; and

WHEREAS, 40% of the industrial capacity of the United States and 60% of the Canadian capacity is centered in the Great Lakes region; and

WHEREAS, shippers using the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway System save $3.6 billion annually in transportation costs, and

WHEREAS, investing in navigational improvements along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway will both create jobs and pay dividends well into the future; and

WHEREAS, there are two critical improvements to navigation on the Great Lakes that require the immediate attention of the United States government;

WHEREAS, the first improvement is another Poe-sized lock because the exiting, aging locks, which connect Lake Superior to the lower four Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway, handle more than 80 million tons of iron ore, coal, grain and other cargos each year and are vulnerable to failure; and

WHEREAS, the second improvement is more dredging because harbors choked with sand or silt are unusable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with construction of a new, large lock on the St. Mary’s River at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan as directed by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the United States Congress to provide adequate funding to enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address a backlog of dredging work in shipping lanes of deep-draft ports, lakes, channels and rivers of the Great Lakes Basin – projects that now exceed $200 million.

Signed this 18th day of June, 2009

George Heartwell, Chair
Mayor of Grand Rapids
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative