



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

**RESOLUTION 1 – 2009M**

**BEACHES OF THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE REGION**

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system is an integral natural resource that supports the environmental health of the region as well as the vitality of the region’s communities, industry, economy, and recreational activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the beaches of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region are primary access points for people to connect with the waters of the Lakes and River and as a result, the need to ensure the health and safety of beaches is paramount; and

**WHEREAS**, currently approved recreational water quality test methods are slow to provide results, often resulting in beaches being posted or closed the day after high bacteria levels, and a great deal of research has been conducted to better understand what the appropriate indicator organism should be for human health; and

**WHEREAS**, a federal district court found U.S. EPA in violation of the BEACH Act 2000 and required them to complete reporting to assess pathogens in recreational water and to adopt new or revised recreational water quality criteria; and U.S. EPA has committed to adopting revised criteria by 2012; and the Canadian federal government water safety guidelines are in the process of revision without a set release date; and

**WHEREAS**, in the U.S. coastal states receive federal funding through the BEACH Act that is distributed to beaches for monitoring and public notification programs but this has never been appropriated at the fully authorized funding level and some states lack the necessary funding to properly monitor bathing beaches; and

**WHEREAS**, in Canada there is a lack of coordination and leadership on the issue of beach management as multiple provincial ministries have authority over certain elements of beach management, and there is no dedicated funding for beach monitoring or public notification programs; and

**WHEREAS**, in the U.S. the BEACH Act of 2000 must be reauthorized and a reauthorization bill was introduced to Congress in 2008 and passed the House but never made it out of the Environment and Public Works Committee in the Senate; and

**WHEREAS**, municipalities recognize the need for accurate and rapid test methods to test water quality at beaches so that there is timely notification of swim advisories or beach closings; and



**WHEREAS**, U.S. EPA and other federal, state, tribal and non-governmental organization beach partners developed a standardized sanitary survey form in 2007 for beach managers to use to identify possible sources of contamination at beaches, thereby completing a key recommendation in the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy* Coastal Health chapter; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has spearheaded the Clean Beaches Initiative through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration with federal, state, and tribal partners to encourage the broad use of the standardized sanitary survey throughout the region and to disseminate best beach management practices to beach managers.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative encourages the use of a standardized beach sanitary survey around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on beach managers to address, where possible, sources of contamination identified at their beaches through proven remediation measures; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the BEACH Act in a manner that allows for the use of rapid test methods and the expanded use of allocated funds for implementing sanitary surveys, source tracking, modeling and remediation measures, and to fund the Act at its fully authorized funding level; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec to develop a more cohesive and integrated approach to beach management, including creating a beach management hub within a ministry that has the authority to coordinate with all orders of government on beach management, and supporting beach monitoring and public notification programs, both through funding and governance, to ensure uniformity and consistency within Canada; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. and Canadian federal and provincial governments to revise recreational water quality standards to reflect the latest science with respect to appropriate indicator organisms, rapid test methods, and risk based management concepts, and to harmonize as much as possible the beach standards and notification measures since these are shared waters.

Signed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2009

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