



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

RESOLUTION 7 – 2009M

BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTMENT IN PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin supports a wide range of water and land uses including urban and rural development, agriculture, industry, power generation, recreation, as well as other economic activities, and these activities are directly impacted by the environmental health and integrity of the region; and

WHEREAS, managing algal blooms, controlling aquatic invasive species, closing beaches, and dealing with other Great Lakes water quality issues can be costly, requiring considerable clean-up efforts in reacting to problems after the fact, rather than preventing them from occurring; and

WHEREAS, quantifying and communicating these costs would provide concrete support and rationale for reconsidering current water management frameworks, revising existing policies, and renewing the need for collaboration to protect, conserve and restore the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River provide a range of essential ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling, flood control, climate regulation, maintenance of biodiversity, and wildlife habitat, among many others, all of which are connected to our economic, social and environmental wellbeing, but currently not always adequately reflected in economic indicators and policy decisions; and

WHEREAS, research, mapping and analysis of these and other ecosystem goods and services helps to understand the benefits of protection, conservation, and restoration, and assists in bridging the gap between science and policy; and

WHEREAS, valuing the market and non-market values of wetlands and other natural areas can help set priorities and allocate spending on protection, conservation and restoration; and also help to encourage public participation and support for such programs; and

WHEREAS, quantifying the benefits of Great Lakes protection and restoration can be useful for managers requesting funding from municipal, provincial and federal government departments that rely heavily on numerical values when making decisions; and

WHEREAS, municipalities would like to work with other levels of government to measure the value of ecological services terms that decision-makers can fully incorporate into their management and policy frameworks; and



WHEREAS, a recent study by the Brookings Institution estimated that \$26 billion in Great Lakes protection and restoration investments, would generate over \$50 billion in economic activity, yielding an investment return of 2:1; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is in need of significant infrastructure investments relating to drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, wetland restoration, conservation, transportation, and other areas; and

WHEREAS, the current infrastructure deficit can be managed, in part, by investing in green infrastructure, when and where appropriate, to avert having to invest in large capital expenditures, reduce and conserve resource use, and build on existing infrastructure with an emphasis on new and innovative techniques and retrofit designs; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to measure how effectively investment in green infrastructure alternatives – such as water and energy conservation and efficiency techniques, new design standards that help adapt to climate change, and “up the pipe” solutions to stormwater management issues – can help save money in the long term, create employment, reduce infrastructure capacity challenges, and better protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence environment; and

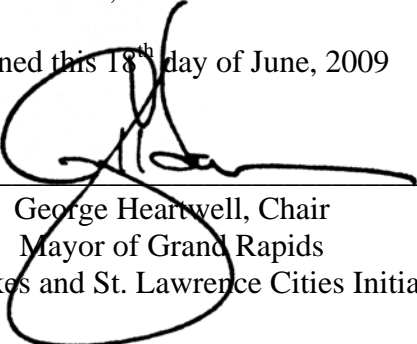
WHEREAS, during the Canada-Ontario Agreement Memorandum of Cooperation process, Great Lakes Mayors and Chairs met with Ontario Ministers at a Summit meeting in May 2009 and agreed to work together, in partnership with the federal government, universities, and other parties, on economic studies directed at measuring the value of Great Lakes shoreline activities, both to develop the business case to drive investments in the Great Lakes and to measure the results of the investments made; and

WHEREAS, investments related to protection, conservation and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River will ensure the quality of life and economic and social wellbeing of the people of the region, in addition to preserving or enhancing the long-term environmental health of the basin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative encourages the U.S. and Canadian federal, state/provincial, First Nations & Tribes, and municipal governments to work collaboratively with other parties to further develop the business case for investment in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection, conservation, and restoration, including investment in the science to measure, value and monitor ecological goods and services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, wherever possible, will communicate the business case for investment that is developed, in order to further promote investment in Great Lakes protection, conservation, and restoration.

Signed this 18th day of June, 2009



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