WHEREAS, the Great Lakes mayors collectively address common issues related to regional development that promote waterborne commerce and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities, states/provinces, and nations; and

WHEREAS, the increased use of maritime transportation will reduce environmental pressures and improve the quality of air and water, while at the same time reducing the social and economic pressures caused by landside traffic and congestion; and

WHEREAS, short sea shipping is a form of maritime transportation that does not transit an ocean and utilizes inland and coastal waterways to move commercial freight; and

WHEREAS, short sea shipping services provide an environmentally friendly mode of transportation for goods moving port-to-port along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway - ensuring a greatly reduced carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, Great Lakes mayors see short sea shipping as both a viable and desirable mode of regional transportation that will stimulate jobs in the marine sector; and

WHEREAS, the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) is a U.S. federal tax imposed on shippers based on the value of goods being shipped to or from U.S. ports; and

WHEREAS, the HMT creates a disincentive for shippers to transport high-value freight by water and consequently encourages greater highway congestion; and

WHEREAS, shippers have identified the HMT as a primary impediment to the development of new short sea shipping services; and

WHEREAS, providing a narrow exemption from the HMT for non-bulk commercial cargo would encourage the movement of freight from congested highways and border crossings to marine alternatives.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the United States Congress to eliminate the Harbor Maintenance Tax on non-bulk commercial cargo to encourage the development of short sea shipping services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative urges Congress to enact H.R. 3486, the Short Sea Shipping Act of 2009.

Signed this 17th day of June, 2010

Denis Lapointe, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield