



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

Resolution 4 – 2012M

Support for Urban and Rural Stormwater Management
in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin

Submitted by: the Town of Ajax, ON and the Town of Goderich, ON

WHEREAS, stormwater has been recognized by the International Joint Commission (IJC) and Canadian and US regulatory authorities as the leading non-point source of pollutants to nearshore water quality in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, the volume and frequency of untreated stormwater discharged to the nearshore can only be expected to increase in the foreseeable future - due to more severe and numerous weather events and climate change, compounded in urban areas by planned growth and intensification - unless more proactive stormwater planning and management is applied and implemented in urban and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, rural stormwater contributes to the flooding and erosion of agricultural and rural land, erosion and pollution along shorelines and development of gullies that directly conduct untreated stormwater into Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waters, and in extreme conditions, damages infrastructure and results in situations that may pose a threat to public safety; and

WHEREAS, rural stormwater management requires different approaches to urban stormwater management that involve increased storage of water on agricultural and rural land and shoreline erosion control through naturalized infrastructure, such as improved drainage and the use of systems that consist of grassed waterways, buffer strips, forest cover, gully erosion control, constructed or restored wetlands and constructed berms; and

WHEREAS, action to effectively manage rural stormwater run-off through the installation of naturalized infrastructure has multiple benefits including reducing non-point source pollution, reducing flooding and erosion, reducing loss of farmland and lakefront property from gully erosion thereby protecting municipal assessment and landowners natural assets(soil/nutrients) along the lakeshore and improving and protecting recreation/tourism along the lakeshore; and

WHEREAS, support for naturalized infrastructure in the management of rural stormwater run-off also helps landowners and municipalities adapt to the impacts of climate change in ways that help to mitigate climate change because natural infrastructure takes carbon out of the atmosphere and locks it up in plant material; and



WHEREAS, a number of stakeholders and local authorities along the Lake Huron Shoreline in Ontario have launched two important initiatives, including a Rural Stormwater Management Model that will result in a better understanding of how stormwater moves and is managed on rural and agricultural land, and will be valuable to farmers and other landowners in guiding their drainage management efforts, and the Lake Huron South East Shores initiative, a multi-stakeholder project with provincial support, to harness local collaboration to address sources of pollution along the shoreline; and

WHEREAS, many urban municipalities in Ontario and Quebec have fallen behind their US counterparts in stormwater management, in large part due to a lack of funding needed to complete municipal urban stormwater management plans and select stormwater infrastructure retrofits/projects; and

WHEREAS, some municipal governments have borne the expense of completing shoreline protection plans and stormwater retrofit studies and now know what projects need to be implemented, but supportive sources of funding from senior governments to implement effective projects and conduct monitoring and analyses to measure improvements in water quality have been lacking; and

WHEREAS, to support ‘climate-ready’, resilient communities, it is imperative that municipal stormwater management plans, retrofits and projects be designed to accommodate predicted impacts of climate change on planned urban areas in terms of both controlling water quantity and improving water quality), using means such as stormwater ponds, end-of-pipe treatment facilities and wetland restoration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cities Initiative calls on senior governments in Canada and the United States to commit to financial and technical support for municipalities via the anticipated revised Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the US Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Saint Lawrence Plan, the anticipated renewed Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and the anticipated Ontario *Great Lakes Protection Act* for the purpose of completing and implementing sustainable urban and rural stormwater management plans, green or naturalized stormwater infrastructure and retrofit projects, and public awareness programs, and supporting monitoring and regularly reporting on water quality to citizens, in the short, medium and long term; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Cities Initiative respectfully request provincial, state and federal authorities to support municipal efforts to become ‘climate change resilient’ communities, for example, by the sharing of satellite imagery and precipitation data, updating regulatory floodplain models and stormwater management models, downscaling climate change predictive modelling, and supporting infrastructure risk assessments; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cities Initiative encourages relevant state, provincial and federal authorities and the Binational Executive Committee of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to increase support for the development and implementation of naturalized infrastructure to more effectively manage rural stormwater run-off around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that members of the Cities Initiative express their support for the Lake Huron Shoreline Rural Stormwater Management Model and pledge to help in the dissemination of information from the project through webinars and other means to its full membership; and that the members of the Cities Initiative express their support for the creation of a Lake Huron South East Shores municipal group with Cities Initiative representation, to work with the existing Lake Huron South East Shores Executive Committee to advance shoreline restoration in the region.

Signed this 27th day of June, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian McMullan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "M".

Brian McMullan, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of St. Catharines