



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

**RESOLUTION 1 – 2013M**

**CLIMATE IMPACTS IN THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE REGION AND**  
**BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

**WHEREAS**, the climate is changing in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region;  
and

**WHEREAS**, in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region the impacts of this climate change include more frequent high-intensity weather events causing flooding and increased stormwater flows into receiving waters, fluctuating water levels, reduced ice cover on the Lakes and River, extended droughts, and altered nearshore and coastal systems; and

**WHEREAS**, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative member municipalities are experiencing these impacts, as evidenced by the devastating high intensity storms and flooding that hit Duluth, MN and Thunder Bay, ON and the prolonged drought in the American mid-in the summer of 2012, as well as more gradual impacts felt throughout the basin, like historically low water levels, higher ambient air temperature, higher water temperature, large algal blooms, and accelerated erosion of coastlines; and

**WHEREAS**, these climate change impacts affect municipalities and their residents as they can threaten public health and safety, damage infrastructure and personal property, degrade water quality, compromise coastlines and other natural habitats, disrupt municipal operations, and impede industry, business, shipping, recreational activities, and tourism; and

**WHEREAS**, building resiliency involves new thinking with respect to the design and operation of water systems, sanitary sewers, stormwater systems, electricity distribution, road and bridge construction, emergency services, as well as the engagement of residents and businesses in building social networks to ensure rapid response in the event of a weather-related emergency; and

**WHEREAS** resiliency also involves evaluating and anticipating the vulnerability to climate change of key economic sectors on which municipalities are dependent, including tourism and recreation, agriculture, commercial fishing, maritime transportation, natural resource extraction, and health services; and

**WHEREAS**, recent experience in hard-hit communities has demonstrated that the benefits of investing in adaptation and resiliency far outweigh the costs of infrastructure failure, property damage or loss of life as a result of severe weather events; and



**WHEREAS**, while it is critical that cities continue to help mitigate the causes that lead to changes in climate, like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, cities must also focus on building resiliency to this change as it is already underway; and

**WHEREAS**, most Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative members report that they are already experiencing the effects of climate change, and anticipate greater impacts within the next five years;

**WHEREAS**, many municipalities are only at the beginning stages of adaptation planning, and have not yet begun implementation, due to a number of barriers including the lack of support for making the necessary investments to build resilient communities, the lack of easily available predictive and historical data and information at a scale and in a format that municipalities can use, the lack of facilitated guidance to assist municipalities to make sense of climate data and information, and the unintended exclusion of smaller and mid-sized communities from adaptation planning services and efforts that are often quite costly and resource intensive.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative recognize the need to begin working now on building resiliency and adapting to climate change in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative support the implementation of the GLSLCI Green CiTTS Resiliency and Adaptation Service for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipalities (RASM), an effort to support and accelerate municipal activity in building resiliency and adapting to climate change through a bi-national, facilitated resiliency and adaptation service with peer-to-peer support for members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the provincial, state and federal governments to provide the necessary assistance to municipalities to overcome the barriers to climate adaptation, primarily by providing funding for the investments needed to create resilient communities, and by making predictive and historical weather and climate data in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region available at a scale and in a format suitable for municipal planning.

Signed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2013

---

Tom Barrett, Chair  
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative  
Mayor of Milwaukee