



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

RESOLUTION 2 – 2013M

LOW WATER LEVELS IN THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE BASIN

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River have experienced declining water levels over the past 20 years, sometimes below any documented historic levels, causing strong concern across the basin, notably in Georgian Bay; and

WHEREAS, such changes in water levels threaten the region's environmental well-being with potentially severe impacts on wetlands, shorelines, fish and animal habitat; and

WHEREAS, it is entirely probable that, under current circumstances and given the effects of climate change, water levels in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence will continue to decline for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, such low levels also impact the basin's economic activity, notably maritime commerce, recreational activities, shoreline access for residents and tourists, causing job losses and decreased revenues for all orders of government; and

WHEREAS, increased variability of water levels also threatens the integrity of municipal infrastructure, with significant costs for shoreline communities; and

WHEREAS, the International Joint Commission has examined, and continues to examine, the issue of water levels in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, namely through the International Upper Great Lakes Study and its various reports as well as through the International Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management Task Team and its draft proposed Adaptive Management Plan, *Building Collaboration Across the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River System: An Adaptive Management Plan for Addressing Extreme Water Levels*; and

WHEREAS, Federal, Provincial and State governments have responsibilities to preserve and protect the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, responsible ministries and agencies of both Canada and the U.S. have not offered satisfactory remedial measures or submitted specific studies to address declining water levels on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative underlines its great concern about the current low water levels and their widespread impacts, not only for shoreline communities but the entire basin; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative reiterates its request to both federal governments, the two Canadian provinces and the eight U.S. Great Lakes states to engage their full authority to find, apply and coordinate near, mid, and long term solutions to this problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that further research needs to be conducted on potential causes of declining water levels, notably the dredging of Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River delta and the effects of climate change on precipitation and ice coverage; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that increased financial resources be allocated by Federal, Provincial and State governments to affected shoreline communities for mitigation, compensation and adaptation measures.

Signed this 19th day of June, 2013

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