



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

RESOLUTION 02 – 2015M

ACTION ON NUTRIENT POLLUTION IN THE GREAT LAKES

WHEREAS, harmful algal blooms (HABs) have a direct adverse impact on the Great Lakes aquatic ecosystem, drinking water, water quality, quality of life and economy including recreation, tourism, and property values; and

WHEREAS, if broad and swift action is not taken, HABs, exacerbated by nutrient pollution from human activity, climate change and invasive species, HABs will continue to occur and threaten the health and vitality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system; and

WHEREAS, a HAB in the western basin of Lake Erie caused the Toledo drinking water utility to advise over 400,000 citizens not to drink the water for two days in August 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Toledo drinking water crisis brought to light the numerous challenges faced by cities with respect to HABs and water quality, not only the crisis with drinking water, but lack of protocol on microcystin testing procedures, advisories and health standards, and communication with the public on the crisis; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Cities Initiative convened the Mayors Drinking Water Summit in September 2014 to bring together mayors from around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to develop actions on the issue of nutrients including:

1. Urging US EPA to establish a common advisory limit and an emergency response protocol for microcystin in drinking water for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region and for Health Canada to update its guidelines for microcystin, and for the two to be harmonized;
2. Urging Great Lakes states to establish a phosphorus open lake water quality standard;
3. Urging agriculture to further reduce the runoff from farms into Lake Erie, including better nutrient management and application of the '4R Nutrient Stewardship' program;
4. Urging municipalities to further reduce phosphorus loadings through more green infrastructure, better treatment plant operations, and pollution prevention measures; and

WHEREAS, the Cities Initiative is working to advance near term nutrient reductions from cities, industries, and agriculture through its "Nutrient Action Collaborative" collaboration on the ground with these stakeholders particularly in several river basins in southeastern Wisconsin, the Maumee River basin in the Toledo area, the Saginaw Bay watershed in Michigan



and the Thames River basin in southern Ontario through outreach and discussion with partners in those locales; and

WHEREAS, many cities and other stakeholders around the basin are using techniques to capture stormwater runoff before it can get in sewers that go to the wastewater treatment plants, allowing the sediment to settle in ponds and removing it in dry weather, capturing nutrients in constructed or natural wetlands, utilizing rain gardens, and adopting other practices to reduce the amount of direct runoff to streams and lakes or through wastewater treatment plants, all resulting in reduced nutrient loads to the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence, and their tributaries; and

WHEREAS, under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (WQA), the US and Canadian governments have committed to setting nutrient targets by 2016 and action plans by 2018 to reduce nutrient levels in Lake Erie, and under Annex 4 of the WQA, a binational subcommittee has been tasked with developing recommendations on nutrient targets to meet the 2016 deadline and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is represented on the subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, in February 2014, the International Joint Commission released a report of the Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority – *A Balanced Diet for Lake Erie: Reducing Phosphorus Loadings and Harmful Algal Blooms*, which includes 16 recommendations for all levels of government in Canada and the U.S. to help address the challenge of deteriorating conditions in Lake Erie, including specific targets for total phosphorus loadings and dissolved reactive phosphorus, a nine year implementation timeline for actions to meet these targets, and specific actions to reduce both agricultural and urban phosphorus sources; and

WHEREAS, the Governors of Michigan and Ohio, and the Premier of Ontario have set an ambitious target of a 40% reduction in phosphorus loadings to Western Lake Erie by 2025, and a plan to implement these resolutions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative strongly urges the US EPA and Health Canada to publish their microcystin health advisories and guidelines for use in the 2015 recreational water season and harmonize the advisories and guidelines as much as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cities Initiative encourages participation and action among municipalities, agriculture, industry and others throughout the region to identify and implement nutrient reducing practices as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in advance of February 2016, the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States launch a comprehensive awareness raising campaign to inform and prepare the public and specific stakeholders, particularly the agricultural community, residents on septic systems, and municipalities, for the anticipated nutrient targets and the subsequent action plan to reduce nutrient loadings in Lake Erie and beyond; and



BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States devote the necessary financial and other resources to develop and implement short term actions for nutrient reductions in advance of their 2018 Action Plan commitment under the WQA.

Signed this 17th day of June, 2015

John Dickert, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of Racine