



August 15, 2008

The Honorable James Oberstar, Representative  
Chair, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Mica, Representative  
Ranking Republican, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Oberstar and Representative Mica:

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative), a coalition of 57 U.S. and Canadian cities working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, commends both the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for passing the Great Lakes Legacy Act out of committee. The Cities Initiative remains hopeful that both Chambers will pass final legislation reauthorizing the Great Lakes Legacy Act before Congress adjourns in September 2008.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system, the source of drinking water for approximately 40 million people, is the foundation upon which our communities have been built. Mayors and cities of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin recognize the need to restore and protect this vast freshwater resource to ensure its vitality for generations to come. The cleanup of Areas of Concern (AOCs), severely degraded geographic areas within the Great Lakes Basin, is critical to this endeavor and the Great Lakes Legacy Act is the primary vehicle through which AOC cleanup has been possible.

Enclosed, please find a resolution passed by the Cities Initiative membership at our recent Annual Meeting in Toronto, Ontario. The resolution urges federal, state, and provincial U.S. and Canadian governments to accelerate the cleanup and delisting of AOCs. The resolution further encourages the appropriation of funding to allow for this accelerated process. The increased funding proposed under both the House and Senate Great Lakes

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*David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair*



Legacy Act reauthorization bills would represent a significant improvement over past funding levels and would go a long way to speed up remediation of AOCs.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,

David A. Ullrich  
Executive Director

Cc:

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers, Representative, U.S. House of Representatives

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

**RESOLUTION 5 – 2008M**

**ACCELERATION OF THE RESTORATION OF AREAS OF CONCERN (AOC)**

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are resources of tremendous value to the people of the United States and Canada and add greatly to the economic well-being and quality of life for the citizens who live there and the visitors who travel there; and

**WHEREAS**, contamination from industrial, commercial, agricultural, and domestic sources have caused a wide variety of problems and impairments to the resource over the years; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States and Canada formally designated 43 Areas of Concern (AOC) with especially significant problems in the Great Lakes; and

**WHEREAS**, to date, only three of the AOCs have been restored to the point of being removed from the list of contaminated areas in almost 20 years, while another four are being prioritized by the Canadian Government for clean up by 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, these areas continue to present threats to human health and the environment, and are often viewed as a stigma for the cities and surrounding communities in the vicinity; and

**WHEREAS**, federal, state, and provincial authorities have the primary responsibility for the remediation and restoration work that needs to be done in these contaminated areas under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the Canada Ontario Agreement, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, and the St. Lawrence Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, local government may be in a position to help accelerate the cleanup of these areas; and

**WHEREAS**, study released by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in February of 2008 shows that local governments are investing billions in water quality management programs to help advance the cleanup of AOCs and other nearshore areas; and

**WHEREAS**, a Brookings Institution report recently concluded that the cleanup of AOCs and other investments in the Great Lakes would be expected to reap a 200-300% return on investment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and member cities located in AOCs engage state, provincial and federal governments to determine ways and means to accelerate the clean up and delisting of AOCs, with local government cooperation and involvement; and




**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that where cities determine that local involvement is appropriate and could serve to advance the cleanup process, mayors and their staff look for opportunities to lead and participate in projects to help restore the areas; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that cities look for opportunities to partner with tribes and first nations in these remediation and restoration efforts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that cities call on the federal, state, and provincial authorities to prepare and implement a plan to accelerate the cleanup and delisting of AOCs, and that Congress, the Canadian Parliament, and provincial and state legislatures, appropriate or budget the necessary funding to allow for this accelerated remediation process.

Signed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2008

  
Lynn Peterson, Chair  
Mayor of Thunder Bay  
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative