



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

RESOLUTION 6 – 2016M

MICROBEADS AND MARINE DEBRIS

WHEREAS, microbeads and marine debris pose a threat to the short and long-term health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and the species within it; and

WHEREAS, many personal care products contain small plastic beads less than 5mm in size that separate during use and wind up going down the drain and leaving homes in the wastewater; and

WHEREAS, these microbeads do not decompose and most are so small they pass through wastewater treatment plants and are discharged to the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence, and other receiving waters; and

WHEREAS, the microbeads are a hazard to fish and wildlife in that they attract and have toxic chemicals adhere to them and appear as food; and

WHEREAS, once ingested, the toxic microbeads can cause health problems for the fish and wildlife, and for people who might ingest them; and

WHEREAS, there are natural substitutes for the microbeads available at this time, and many personal care products are already using them; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative commends the United States government for passing the “Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015,” which bans the production and distribution of products containing microbeads due to concerns about threats to the environment and water quality; and

WHEREAS, the Canadian federal government is pursuing the addition of microbeads to the list of toxic substances under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA); and

WHEREAS, non-biodegradable marine debris in sizes larger than 5mm is also present in large quantities in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system; and



WHEREAS, the majority of such marine debris, including nurdles, found in the Great Lakes comes from human activity on the shores and beaches of each of the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, marine debris includes large items, such as industrial materials, fishing gear, and food containers, as well as smaller items, such as plastic wrappers and cigarette butts; and

WHEREAS, volunteers with non-governmental organizations collected over 20,000 kilograms of marine debris along only 1,500 of the 17,000 kilometers of Great Lakes shoreline in 2012; and

WHEREAS, marine debris threatens aquatic life, can be hazardous to shipping traffic, can reduce tourism revenues, and is a significant threat to the health and vitality of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the government of Canada to implement legislation banning the production and distribution of products containing microbeads as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the government of Canada accelerate the CEPA microbeads regulatory process to conclude by Fall 2016; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cities Initiative recognizes that in order to eliminate traces of microbeads in our water systems it will be necessary to address leave-on products, like creams and sunscreen, which can contain microbeads that are smaller than 0.05 mm; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the states, provinces, and federal governments of the United States and Canada develop coordinated marine debris reduction efforts to reduce and prevent the amount of marine debris in the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River system.

Signed this 15th day of June, 2016

Mitch Twolan, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of Huron-Kinloss