



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE ALLIANCE DES VILLES**  
**DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**  
**RESOLUTION 6 – 2019M**

**SUPPORT FOR NATURE BASED ECOTOURISM ALONG THE GREAT LAKES COASTLINES AND  
WATERSHEDS**

***Submitted by: Township of Nipigon***

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of U.S. and Canadian mayors and other local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; and

**WHEREAS**, one of the primary activities and purposes of the organization is to take the lead in bringing together other local governments, state and provincial governments, band councils, tribal governments, and the federal governments, along with business, agricultural, and environmental organizations to build a stronger economy and a healthier ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative are a prominent voice in efforts to protect and restore the vitality of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and improve the quality of life for the residents of the region. Through an integrated approach to environmental, social and economic agendas within their communities, U.S. and Canadian mayors of the Cities Initiative are leading a movement that will sustain our freshwater resources long into the future; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin constitute the world's largest freshwater Biosphere, serving as the economic base for much of Canada and the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, there are ongoing efforts both in Canada and the U.S. to sustainably manage the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, recognizing the region's industrial past and present, current uses of the system, as well as ecological, environmental and economic significance; and

**WHEREAS**, over the last few decades several initiatives, including the proposed former Ontario Great Lakes Heritage Coast Initiative, along the Lake Superior and Georgian Bay coastline, have focused attention on realizing the potential of the Great Lakes to provide social, economic, and ecological benefits to communities in the Great Lakes Basin; and

**WHEREAS**, a significant factor in creating and sustaining social, ecological and economic significance of the Great Lakes, is the investment made by local communities, many of which are facing serious economic hardships; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2008 study conducted by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and the Great Lakes Commission found that local governments around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River invest an estimated \$15 billion annually in efforts to protect and restore the resource; and



**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes Heritage Coast (GLHC) initiative proposal in Ontario in early 2000's and other global ecotourism reviews, found that success is increased by a coordinated marketing of an entire region as an eco-tourism destination, identifying and coordinating protection of key environmental features, sites, views and areas, concurrent strategies for tourism and coastal protection and associated infrastructure and detailed corridor management plans prepared by local communities, First Nations, stakeholder groups and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, heritage sites, provincial, state and federal protected lands, wetlands and waters along with scenic trails (i.e. "Great Lakes Water Front Trail" in Ontario) and scenic byways (i.e. "North Shore Scenic Drive" in North Eastern Minnesota) are found throughout the Great Lakes basin providing the opportunity to create a series of connected binational tourism Corridors/Scenic Byways; and

**WHEREAS**, GLHC Technical Report (2003) supported the conclusion that the GLHC initiative was both environmentally and economically viable and would have a significant impact on the struggling economies of the Lake Superior communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2011/2012 the "Lake Superior Ad Hoc committee" reviewed the work of the GLHC project and concluded "the groundwork research and ideas generated through the GLHC initiative remain relevant and provide excellent source material for future discussions and developments";

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls upon the Provincial, State, and Federal governments to work with First Nations, tribes and indigenous groups, local communities, business, municipalities, conservation groups and other groups, to recognize and further support nature based ecotourism, the protection of key environmental features and the development of coordinated ecotourism strategies in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence as a social, economic and environmental opportunity for local communities; and



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative encourages the Ontario government to consider working with First Nations, tribes and indigenous groups, local communities, business, municipalities, conservation groups and other groups to discuss and consider updating the GLHC initiative proposal to help ensure the long-term protection of the ecological values; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls upon the Provincial, State and Federal Governments to work together with First Nations, tribes and indigenous groups, local communities, business, municipalities, conservation groups and other groups throughout the Great Lakes Basin to further establish a series of connecting corridors/scenic byways throughout the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin to protect the ecosystem and realize economic opportunities for the region.

Signed this 5th day of June 2019

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Michelle Morin Doyle  
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative