

**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE**  
**ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**  
**RESOLUTION 1 – 2019M**

**GREATER INVESTMENT REQUIRED TO REDUCE NUTRIENT IMPACTS ON WATERWAYS**

**WHEREAS**, harmful algal blooms (HABs) and nuisance algae are increasing globally, affect many communities along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and their growth is driven by nutrients such as phosphorus; and

**WHEREAS**, HABs pose a threat to drinking water due to the development of a toxin called microcystin, for which the US Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada have developed guidelines for drinking water; and

**WHEREAS**, HABs also cause damage to lake ecosystem and fisheries, disrupt tourism and recreation, foul waterfronts, damage water infrastructure, close beaches, increase risks for fish and wildlife, and reduce property values, among many other negative impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the HAB in Lake Erie in the summer of 2017 was ranked as the third largest on record, reaching 1,000 square miles from Toledo to the Ontario shoreline, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to recognise that climate change, including increased precipitation, water temperatures, and flooding will increase the frequency and severity of HABs; and

**WHEREAS**, Canada and the United States have committed to a 40% reduction in phosphorus below year 2008 levels, and through the Western Lake Erie Collaborative, Ohio, Michigan and Ontario committed to a 40% phosphorus reduction by 2025, with an aspirational goal of 20% by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, as called for in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Canada- Ontario and the United States each released a domestic action plan in 2018 outlining the governments' plans to achieve the 40% target, and Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Pennsylvania each have developed strategies as well; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to increase investment in the implementation of these Lake Erie action plans, ensure the tracking of actions, and improve the transparency and public reporting of the actions and amount of phosphorus reduced; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Collaborative, of which the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a founding member, recommends a precision conservation approach to nutrients, outlining the need to increase the targeting and prioritisation of actions to those areas and those actions which will result in the greatest phosphorus reductions; and

**WHEREAS**, while much of the current effort is focused on the western portion of the Lake Erie watershed, there is an urgent need to set targets for the eastern portion of Lake Erie, and move quickly to set targets for Lake Ontario; and

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative continues to work with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, farming organisations, municipalities, conservation authorities, drainage

experts, First Nations and other partners on the [Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative](#), to reduce phosphorus loss from farmlands into the Thames River and ultimately Lake Erie; and

**WHEREAS** after reviewing proposals, five innovative technologies have been selected for the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative, and are being installed at up to nine sites in the watershed; and

**WHEREAS** the findings and technologies from the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative could be applied to any watershed; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative supports the Governments of Ontario, Michigan, and Ohio for their commitment to reach 40% phosphorus reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin by 2025; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that while the domestic action plans and state action plans are a step in the right direction, the Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian and US Federal Governments to commit to reaching a 40% phosphorus reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin by 2025, to more specifically indicate in the existing plans the combination of actions that will achieve this reduction, and provide sufficient funding, accountability, and technical support to achieve this target; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative calls for greater targeting and prioritisation of actions to those areas and programs that will result in the greatest reductions in phosphorus loads; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian and US federal governments, provincial and state governments to commit to phosphorus reduction actions in for the Lake Ontario, Superior, Huron, Michigan and the St. Lawrence to reduce hazardous algal blooms; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the federal, provincial, state and other partners increase investments in critical areas, including increasing our understanding of the impacts of HABs on human health and how to minimise their impact on drinking water systems; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Cities Initiative will continue to work with partners including municipalities, First Nations and Tribes, agriculture, environmental groups, conservation groups, business and industry, foundations, and the public on collaborative and coordinated action to reduce nutrients entering waterways in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin.