



June 2023

*A Resolution Submitted by the Township of The Archipelago*



**Responding to Ontario Bill 23 (More Homes Built Faster Act)–  
Protecting Our Natural Capital While Addressing the Housing Crisis**

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario’s Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) – which makes significant changes to the land use planning system in the Province of Ontario – received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has the longest shoreline and largest watershed along the northern shores of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, including Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Georgian Bay, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Seven states share the southern shores of the Great Lakes including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York; and

WHEREAS the State of the Great Lakes 2022 Report written by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Environment and Climate Change Canada classify the Watershed Impacts Status of the Great Lakes as “Fair” (Some ecosystem components are in acceptable condition) and Water Quality Index 65-79 on scale of 0-100; and

WHEREAS per the Independent review of the 2019 flood events in Ontario, “the development of the modern floodplain policy in Ontario, the watershed approach, the conservation authority model and the flood standards have been extremely effective at reducing flood risks, especially in new greenfield development areas”; and

WHEREAS climate change is leading to greater water variability and contributing to increased storm severity and increased flood and erosion risks along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; and

WHEREAS all levels of government, including the Province of Ontario, have a role to play in addressing the housing supply crisis; and

WHEREAS Ontario municipalities recognize the importance of building additional housing units to ensure that current and future residents can continue to find accessible and affordable shelter that meets their needs and have taken steps to promote housing developments within their jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS all levels of government also have a role to play in protecting freshwater resources, particularly in an integrated multinational system like the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and

WHEREAS Bill 23 amends the *Development Charges Act* by freezing, reducing and exempting fees typically levied by municipalities and other authorities; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario estimates that Bill 23 will reduce municipal resources available to service new developments by \$5.1 billion over the next nine years; and

WHEREAS the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has indicated to municipalities that the government is committing to ensuring municipalities are kept whole following changes made in Bill 23; and

WHEREAS Bill 23 limits the role of Conservation Authorities and makes changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, notably by no longer recognizing or considering wetland complexes (hydrological connections) or species at risk in the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) have identified coastal resilience as a priority issue of concern to ensure the integrity of public infrastructure and private property remains in the face of a changing climate in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and

WHEREAS municipal governments, as frontline actors, are critical decision-makers and hold essential knowledge for balancing local needs and planning for growth, while preparing their communities for climate change and protecting the environment and freshwater resources of the basin; and

WHEREAS despite their critical role, local governments already struggle to shoulder their responsibilities with limited tools to finance those obligations, particularly for rural, remote, and Northern communities; and

WHEREAS the Cities Initiative has put in place an Ontario Regional Working Group to engage the Province of Ontario on priority areas of interest to the organization and its members, including ecosystem and source water protection, climate change and coastal resilience, the safe, clean and affordable provision of water services and developing a blue economy in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province of Ontario continue working with municipalities and municipal organizations on the implementation of Bill 23 and other housing initiatives to identify a range of solutions that will address the lack of attainable and affordable housing in the province, while building new housing units in a sustainable manner that is consistent with the province's and municipalities' mandate of keeping people and property safe from natural hazards and protecting the health of our essential freshwater resources;

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Province of Ontario create a permanent, predictable and dedicated infrastructure program to ensure that municipalities can service lands for housing and address growth pressures on existing water and road systems without placing the burden on existing property taxpayers;

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Province of Ontario take a regional approach to the implementation of Bill 23 and other housing policy initiatives to respond to the varying needs of urban, suburban, rural and Northern communities in addressing attainable housing needs and environmental protection;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Cities Initiative is prepared to work with the province and other municipal organizations through its Ontario Regional Working Group to support the twin goals of building more housing and protecting our freshwater resources, which are critical to sustain Ontario's rapidly growing population;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Cities Initiative directs staff to forward a copy of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario and Quebec, the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Governors of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, MP Terry Duguid, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, MP Vance Badawey, Niagara Centre, MP Scott Aitchison, Parry-Sound Muskoka, the six International Joint Commission Commissioners, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and all municipalities in the province of Ontario.