



June 2023

A Resolution Submitted by the City of Cleveland, OH



Advancing Climate Action Plans Across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin

WHEREAS in December 2015 Canada and the United States were among the 196 parties to adopt the Paris Agreement, a legally-binding international treaty to keep the global temperature increase “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial levels while seeking to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

AND WHEREAS several mayor-led organizations contributed positively to the negotiations resulting in the Paris Agreement, with networks of local elected leaders continuing to sustain the political will for climate action through ongoing, city-led diplomatic efforts.

AND WHEREAS in October 2018 the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published the *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*. This report warned that global heating exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would have dire consequences for the environment and human health, leading the international community to accept 1.5°C as the science-based target for climate action.

AND WHEREAS global heating is already 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels, meaning drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions before 2030 are necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, build towards emissions neutrality by 2050 and avoid increasingly catastrophic climate outcomes.

AND WHEREAS in March 2023 the IPCC released the *Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Report*, which concluded that “Deep, rapid and sustained mitigation and accelerated implementation of adaptation actions in this decade would reduce projected losses and damages for humans and ecosystems... and deliver many co-benefits, especially for air quality and health.”

AND WHEREAS each party to the Paris Agreement pledged to develop and implement national climate action plans – also known as nationally determined contributions – in order to curtail greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and enhance resilience to climate change.

AND WHEREAS climate action – both mitigation and adaptation – at the local level is essential given that municipalities are often major sources of GHG emissions, as well as being highly vulnerable to variable water levels, urban flooding and other climate risks.

AND WHEREAS climate action plans (CAPs) are critical tools that assist municipalities in making substantial progress on climate mitigation and adaptation, specifically by:

- Identifying major sources of GHG emissions and advancing reduction strategies
- Determining climate impacts, assessing climate risks, and prioritizing climate-resilience measures
- Engaging residents to ensure planned actions are inclusive and equitable, with widespread environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits for the entire community
- Assessing the governance landscape, including financing options and other tools to mainstream implementation of CAPs across municipal government

AND WHEREAS robust climate action would generate significant benefits for municipalities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and their residents, including, but not limited to:

- New jobs in clean energy, building decarbonization, and other clean industries
- Reduced vulnerability to urban flooding and other extreme events
- Transportation electrification, improved air quality and less dependence on fossil fuels
- Energy-efficient buildings and other sustainable infrastructure
- Reduced urban heat island effects through expanded access to resilient green and blue spaces
- Adoption of innovative technologies in water, waste and other municipal service sectors
- New opportunities for economic development and revenue generation

AND WHEREAS in June 2023 the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative held its 20th anniversary Annual General Meeting in Chicago, gathering under the theme of “Climate Action: Perfecting Your City’s Plan.” Members in attendance received hands-on training on developing or implementing CAPs, establishing a strong foundation for basin-wide climate action consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

AND WHEREAS the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$5 billion for Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, a program administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help states and major metropolitan areas in the United States reduce GHG emissions, with \$250 million set aside for plan development and \$4.75 billion set aside for plan implementation.

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada released its final draft National Adaptation Strategy in fall 2022, with a commitment of a \$1.6 billion “down payment” to support the implementation of the strategy.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative will continue to support its members in the development and implementation of CAPs that promote climate mitigation and adaptation action while generating broadly-shared benefits for current and future generations across the basin

- Members will continue to work with the Cities Initiative, including via the Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience, to:
 - Advocate to federal, state and provincial governments for favorable policies and increased funding to enhance municipalities' capacity to address climate change
 - Collaborate with other member municipalities to share insights and best practices, secure financing and surmount common obstacles to developing and implementing CAPs that benefit all residents
 - Educate all stakeholders on increasing climate risks and the need for effective climate action across the basin

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: Ali Zaidi, Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor, the White House; Michael Regan, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Richard Spinrad, Administrator, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Deanne Criswell, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Nina Hachigian, Special Representative for Subnational Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State; the Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; the Hon. Bill Blair, Compact of Mayors; Governors of the eight Great Lakes states; and Premiers of the Province of Ontario and the Province of Quebec.