



**GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE**
CITIES INITIATIVE



June 2023

A Resolution Submitted by the Village of Sodus Point, NY and the City of Duluth, MN



Promoting Effective Federal-State-Local Collaboration on the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study

WHEREAS communities in the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River Basin continue to suffer the environmental and economic impacts of various coastal hazards, including severe storms, erosion and fluctuating lake levels.

AND WHEREAS historic high lake levels in 2017 and 2019 caused millions of dollars in damage to coastal properties and communities.

AND WHEREAS climate change is anticipated to exacerbate these issues, putting local communities at risk of coastal hazards, damaging local ecosystems and threatening the development of blue and green economies across the basin.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has partnered with the eight Great Lakes states to conduct the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, intended to help communities “withstand, recover and adapt” to future climate change and extreme weather events.

AND WHEREAS the study will assess the vulnerability of 5,200 miles of U.S. Great Lakes shoreline, propose resiliency measures, and create a Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Plan to guide future investments in the basin.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Congress authorized the study under the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 with broad bipartisan support and later appropriated \$500,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and \$3 million for FY23 to initiate the study.

AND WHEREAS, in September 2022, USACE entered into a cost-share agreement with the Great Lakes states, committing the partners to a 75 percent federal and 25 percent non-federal split of the \$14.4 million anticipated cost of the study.

AND WHEREAS communities throughout the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River Basin are rising to meet these coastal hazards head on by conducting their own vulnerability assessments and improving local infrastructure to build more resilient shorelines.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has identified Climate Change and Coastal Resilience as a pillar of our strategic plan to guide policy and programmatic work until 2025.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative has established a Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience to address these issues of erosion, variable water levels and other coastal hazards.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative has established the Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative (RCPI) to provide capacity-building and planning support to basin communities, helping local leaders identify priority project that protect their shorelines, foster a thriving natural environment and create or restore benefits for public enjoyment.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- USACE and the Great Lakes states should prioritize the active participation of local elected leaders and municipal staff at all stages of the study.
- Whenever possible, the study should promote:
 - green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions, with clearly defined measures of success
 - scalable solutions and publicly accessible data to help communities of all sizes benefit from the project and equitably access federal support.
 - the full range of functions offered by resilient coastal areas, including safety, environmental, recreational and economic, and prioritize these crucial needs.
- The Cities Initiative is committed to fostering a mutually-beneficial partnership with USACE and the Great Lakes states by sharing relevant information with the project sponsors and providing timely feedback on proposed solutions. In particular, the Cities Initiative will work with the project sponsors to ensure the Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience, RCPI participants and other Cities Initiative members, as appropriate, contribute to the study and shape its outcomes.
- The Government of Canada should – in close collaboration with USACE, Great Lakes states, and the Cities Initiative – implement a similar resiliency study to get a more comprehensive assessment of coastal vulnerability while protecting shoreline communities across the basin from the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: leadership at the USACE Great Lakes and Ohio Division and the Chicago District; and the Great Lakes Task Force and relevant committees in the U.S. Congress; and relevant representatives from the eight Great Lakes states.