



*A Resolution Submitted by the city of Montréal, QC*



**TRANSFORMING THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN INTO A THRIVING BLUE-GREEN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR WHILE SAFEGUARDING OUR FRESHWATER RESOURCES**

May 2024

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin forms the largest freshwater ecosystem in the world, providing drinking water to more than 40 million people and serving as the foundation of our communities' economic prosperity.

AND WHEREAS basin communities collectively comprise the world's third largest economy, generating \$6 trillion in economic output annually.

AND WHEREAS heavy industry and manufacturing has predominated in parts of the basin, often degrading our water quality and perpetuating environmental challenges in disadvantaged communities.

AND WHEREAS basin-wide ecosystem restoration efforts are yielding significant economic dividends for local communities.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. federal government's \$4.17-billion investment in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative since 2010 and the Canadian federal government's recent commitment of \$420 million are two important contributors to this virtuous circle between environmental protection and sustainable economic development.

AND WHEREAS some experts anticipate climate-related migration to basin communities to grow as conditions worsen in arid and coastal environments in Canada and the United States, with freshwater access being a major advantage.

AND WHEREAS Canadian and U.S. residents are increasingly keen to live, work, invest and play in vibrant communities with ample access to environmentally-friendly lifestyles, jobs, development and recreation.

AND WHEREAS the blue economy is growing exponentially, with the basin's freshwater catalyzing increased economic opportunities for innovative businesses, waterfront revitalization and the cruise and shipping industries.

AND WHEREAS the green economy is growing quickly, with sustainable industries on track to see revenues exceed \$5 trillion by 2025, with consumers across all ages and demographics increasingly demanding green products and services.

AND WHEREAS federal, state and provincial governments in Canada and the United States are beginning to take bold action to drive blue-green economic transformation.

AND WHEREAS in Canada, the federal government is developing a Blue Economy Strategy to encourage economic innovation and investment in shoreline communities, as well as make progress on decarbonization goals.

AND WHEREAS Ontario recently outlined a comprehensive approach to harness the potential of the marine sector for economic, environmental and social benefits in the province, complementing the Québec government's maritime strategy.

AND WHEREAS in the United States, the federal government is investing billions of dollars to enhance coastal resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and nurture the creation of new green and blue industries.

AND WHEREAS Illinois and Michigan are two Great Lakes states that are establishing themselves as leaders in the clean-energy revolution, having signed into state law ambitious plans to expand clean and renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs in the climate sector.

AND WHEREAS building a thriving freshwater economy requires attracting green and blue industries to foster job creation and climate and water innovation; harnessing clean, accessible waterfronts as drivers of economic revitalization and equitable communities; implementing clean and renewable energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build livable communities; and expanding sustainable, integrated, water-borne commerce, mobility and tourism.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative was founded in 2003 as a coalition of local elected leaders working collaboratively to promote the economic, environmental and social health of basin communities, making the Cities Initiative the ideal organization to facilitate sustainable, resilient and inclusive economic development while safeguarding our freshwater resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative will launch the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation to promote sustainable, resilient and inclusive economic development basin-wide and appropriate freshwater stewardship for the benefit of current and future generations
- The Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation will develop the *Action Plan for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Economic Transformation, 2025-2035*, a roadmap for basin communities to capitalize on this historic moment to become a globally-renowned, blue-green economic corridor, which will be released at the Cities Initiative's next Annual General Meeting in Milwaukee, WI, in May 2025
- The *Action Plan for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Economic Transformation, 2025-2035* will map paths for municipal action to support the following:
  - Industrial Transformation: attracting green and blue industries to foster job creation and climate and water innovation while protecting the basin's unparalleled freshwater ecosystem
  - Energy Transformation: implementing clean and renewable energy sources to respond to the expected growth in clean energy consumption for businesses, industries and residents
  - Transportation Transformation: expanding sustainable, integrated, water-borne commerce, mobility and tourism
  - Waterfront Transformation: intentional development of shorelines weaving together multiple uses, including residential and recreation, to create accessible and thriving economic centers
- Mayor Valérie Plante and the City of Montréal pledge to work closely with the Cities Initiative and its members to guide the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation and advance its mission

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec; the Governors of the eight Great Lakes states; select members of the Great Lakes Task Force; Canadian ministers and critics on relevant issues; the Canadian Parliament's Great Lakes & St Lawrence Interparliamentary Group and senior officials in the Canadian and U.S. federal governments, as appropriate.