

A Resolution Submitted by the Township of the Archipelago, ON



MONITORING AND MANAGING MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION ACROSS THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN

May 2025

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin is home to much of North America's freshwater resources and a range of aquatic species of ecological, commercial and cultural importance.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are a vital natural resources, providing drinking water, recreation and economic benefits to millions of people in both Canada and the United States.

AND WHEREAS the presence of microplastics in the Great Lakes poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems, wildlife and human health.

AND WHEREAS studies indicate that microplastics are found throughout the basin and that they are elevated in heavily populated areas.

AND WHEREAS the *Final Report of the International Joint Commission (IJC) Great Lakes Science Advisory Board Work Group on Microplastics*, published in November 2024, provides comprehensive recommendations for monitoring, assessing and managing microplastic pollution in the Great Lakes.

AND WHEREAS the IJC report defines microplastics as "solid polymeric materials to which chemical additives or other substances may have been added, which are particles greater than 1 µm and less than 5,000 µm in all three dimensions. Polymers that are derived in nature that have not been chemically modified (other than by hydrolysis) are excluded."

AND WHEREAS the IJC report emphasizes the need for a coordinated binational effort to address microplastic pollution, including the designation of microplastics as a "chemical of mutual concern" under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA).

AND WHEREAS the IJC report outlines the importance of standardized methods for sampling, analyzing and reporting microplastic pollution to ensure consistent and reliable data across the basin.

AND WHEREAS the IJC report highlights the necessity of public education and outreach to raise awareness about the sources and impacts of microplastic pollution and to promote actions that reduce plastic waste.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative urges the Canadian and U.S. federal governments to take immediate action to implement these recommendations, including the designation of microplastics as a chemical of mutual concern under the GLWQA.
- The Canadian and U.S. federal governments should implement regionally coordinated monitoring programs following harmonized methods and adhering to consistent reporting guidelines to inform ecological risk assessment, mitigation and management of microplastics in the basin.
- The Canadian and U.S. federal governments should provide financial support for continued research by all sectors to refine monitoring and analytical capabilities, as well as to strengthen ecological risk assessments. This could include developing laboratory techniques to improve detection and increase the throughput of microplastic analyses, using new laboratory methods to better understand the characteristics of microplastics in the Great Lakes to advance ecological risk assessments, testing the effectiveness and reproducibility of monitoring techniques and expanding our understanding of the ecological effects of microplastic exposure on Great Lakes relevant species, particularly exposures in sediment.
- The Canadian and U.S. federal governments should prevent the emissions of plastic and reduce plastic pollution across the basin, including by monitoring and sampling wastewater treatment plants and industrial discharge across the basin.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change Julie Dabrusin, President of the Canada Water Agency Mark Fisher and Lee Zeldin, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.