

A Resolution Submitted by Halton Region, ON and the City of Lorain, OH



UPHOLDING THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN AGREEMENT AND COMPACT

May 2025

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin are home to about 21 percent of the world's surface fresh water, an abundant supply that provides drinking water to more than 30 million people and serves as the foundation of the world's third largest economy.

AND WHEREAS an abundant supply does not equal an infinite supply, as about one percent of the basin's water is naturally replenished each year, meaning water diversions and excessive consumption can have a significant and long-term impact on basin-wide water levels and ecosystem health.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (the Agreement) was signed by the States of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, as well as the Province of Ontario and the Government of Québec, in December 2005, recognizing the basin's fresh water as a shared public resource and establishing a framework to manage its water supply.

AND WHEREAS the companion Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (the Compact) was subsequently ratified by all eight Great Lakes state legislatures and received the approval and consent of the U.S. Congress – with overwhelming bipartisan support – before U.S. President George W. Bush signed the Compact into law in October 2008, codifying the interstate compact in federal statute.

AND WHEREAS the Compact, which went into effect in December 2008, bans new out-of-basin diversions (with limited exceptions), outlines criteria for large-scale consumptive uses of Great Lakes water and establishes a framework for states and provinces to review proposed uses of basin water.

AND WHEREAS the Compact created the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council – comprised of the governors of the eight Great Lakes states – to adjudicate diversion applications.

AND WHEREAS the Compact also establishes a Regional Body – comprised of the Compact Council plus the premiers of Ontario and Québec – to review diversion applications and issue a declaration of finding for the Compact Council’s consideration.

AND WHEREAS the Compact Council’s diversion review process has since been tested and proven as the strongest mechanism available to maintain water within the basin and promote basin-wide collaboration on freshwater protection.

AND WHEREAS experts anticipate significant increases in future demand for Great Lakes water from within and outside the basin, due to population growth, economic development, climate-related migration and increased water scarcity in other parts of North America and beyond.

AND WHEREAS the rapid expansion of hyperscale data centers and other large-scale energy and water consumers across the basin is already driving unprecedented water demand and requires ongoing collaboration to monitor and regulate water consumption.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has strongly supported the Agreement and Compact, with our members approving numerous resolutions over the past two decades backing these vital tools and calling for sustainable water use across the basin.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative established the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation in May 2024 to develop the *Action Plan for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Economic Transformation, 2025-2035*, which will encourage members and industries to prioritize sustainable practices to limit water consumption.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative reaffirms its unwavering support for the Agreement and Compact, especially the ban on out-of-basin diversions.
- The Cities Initiative calls on the governors of the eight Great Lakes states and the premiers of Ontario and Québec to take all necessary actions to uphold the Agreement and Compact and continue their effective implementation.
- The Cities Initiative commits to continue working with all members to promote sustainable water use across the basin while ensuring that neither economic development nor other challenges threaten the basin’s long-term water supply, preserving our precious freshwater resources for current and future generations.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: the governors of the eight Great Lakes states; the Great Lakes Task Force in the U.S. Congress; the premiers of Ontario and Québec and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Group of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.