

A Resolution Submitted by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent



SUPPORTING MODERNIZATION AND AUTOMATION IN GREAT LAKES FRESHWATER FISH PROCESSING

May 2026

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region supports both commercial and recreational fisheries that contribute significantly to regional economies, food systems, tourism and employment in coastal and rural communities.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes fisheries sector — including commercial harvesting, processing and related industries — supports regional economies and contributes to a fishery valued at more than \$5.1 billion annually and supporting over 75,000 jobs across our region, according to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

AND WHEREAS many freshwater fish processing facilities are small or medium-sized operations that face labour shortages, aging equipment, limited access to capital and increasing operating costs.

AND WHEREAS automation and modernization technologies can improve productivity, enhance product quality, reduce workplace strain and help processors remain competitive in domestic and international seafood markets.

AND WHEREAS recreational fishing and related tourism activities are key drivers of local economic development, supporting marinas, outfitters, accommodations and other small businesses across the region.

AND WHEREAS strengthening the freshwater fisheries value chain supports regional food security, economic diversification and the sustainable use of Great Lakes resources.

AND WHEREAS the Economic Transformation Action Plan of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative/Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent emphasizes the importance of attracting and retaining sustainable industries, strengthening regional supply

chains and promoting innovation and modernization to support long-term economic growth and resilience.

AND WHEREAS supporting a strong and diversified fisheries sector — across commercial, recreational and tourism activities — contributes to water-centered economic development by strengthening regional supply chains, supporting local businesses and creating jobs in waterfront communities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative encourages the Government of Canada and relevant provincial governments to:
 - Establish a coordinated, region-wide strategy to strengthen the freshwater fisheries sector, including commercial fisheries, recreational fishing, tourism, processing, distribution and market access.
 - Explore funding programs and partnerships that support modernization and automation of fish processing facilities, workforce development, infrastructure improvements and technological innovation across the fisheries value chain.
 - Support recreational fishing and fisheries-related tourism through investments in infrastructure, access to waterways and sustainable tourism.
 - Support greater market development, local consumption and value-added processing of freshwater fish products to enhance economic returns for regional communities and reduce reliance on imported seafood.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Julie Dabrusin; the Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Heath MacDonald; the Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Tim Hodgson; the Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Todd McCarthy; the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, Trevor Jones and the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Mike Harris.