

A Resolution Submitted by the Township of Archipelago



ESTABLISHING AND FUNDING A MUNICIPAL STREAM UNDER THE FRESHWATER ACTION PLAN

May 2026

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative/Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent represents municipal and Indigenous government leaders working to protect freshwater resources and advance economic prosperity across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region.

AND WHEREAS municipalities and First Nations are frontline implementers of freshwater protection, restoration, monitoring and climate adaptation initiatives.

AND WHEREAS municipalities play a critical role in improving water quality, strengthening shoreline and watershed resilience and advancing a growing water innovation economy across the region.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin provides drinking water to more than 40 million people.

AND WHEREAS the 2022 State of the Great Lakes Report, prepared under the Canada–United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, assessed overall water quality in the basin as “Fair,” highlighting the need for continued and accelerated action to restore and protect freshwater ecosystems.

AND WHEREAS municipalities face significant and growing financial pressures to maintain and upgrade aging water infrastructure, with the Canadian Union of Public Employees estimating that over \$50 billion is required to repair and replace drinking water and wastewater systems across Canada.

AND WHEREAS data from Statistics Canada shows that approximately 17 percent of treated drinking water is lost before reaching end users due to leaks and system inefficiencies, reflecting the urgent need for investment in modernization and system renewal.

AND WHEREAS according to Statistics Canada, Canada treats approximately 5,800 million cubic metres of wastewater annually, yet about 3.7 percent is discharged untreated into the environment, posing ongoing risks to water quality and ecosystem health.

AND WHEREAS wastewater infrastructure across Canada is aging and placing growing pressure on local governments, with Statistics Canada reporting that sewage infrastructure had the highest average age of any major infrastructure asset category in 2021 at 17.5 years nationally, while sewage treatment plants specifically averaged 16 years in the latest national data series.

AND WHEREAS many smaller municipalities continue to rely on lagoon-based wastewater systems because they are comparatively simple and lower-cost to operate, but these systems can face significant compliance and performance challenges.

AND WHEREAS Canadian federal data show that boil-water advisories are more common in smaller systems and communities, often reflecting limited technical, managerial and financial capacity, aging infrastructure and increased vulnerability to system failures and contamination events.

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has committed significant investments through the Freshwater Action Plan and established the Canada Water Agency to strengthen freshwater protection nationwide.

AND WHEREAS effective freshwater protection requires predictable, long-term funding and program structures that enable municipalities of all sizes to participate.

AND WHEREAS investments in municipal freshwater initiatives can support the growth of a water innovation economy and strengthen the economic competitiveness of communities across the region.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative calls on the Government of Canada to fully implement and permanently fund a Municipal Stream under the Freshwater Action Plan, co-designed with municipalities and First Nations and prioritizing the needs of communities across the region.
- This Municipal Stream should:

- Support science, monitoring, restoration, infrastructure planning, climate resilience and local implementation activities led by municipalities and Indigenous communities.
- Include predictable and regularly scheduled funding intakes aligned with municipal budget cycles, enabling municipalities to develop strong and collaborative project proposals.
- Include dedicated access streams for both large and small municipalities, as well as streamlined and proportional application and reporting requirements, ensuring equitable participation across communities of different capacities.
- Provide technical assistance, knowledge exchange and capacity-building support to accelerate the adoption of innovative freshwater protection and infrastructure solutions across municipalities.

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 Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Todd McCarthy; the Quebec Minister of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Pascale Déry and the President of the Canada Water Agency, Mark Fisher.