



*A Resolution Submitted by the City of Milwaukee, WI*



## **EXPANDING MARITIME COMMERCE ON THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY**

May 2026

WHEREAS the U.S. economy reaps significant economic benefits from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, which facilitates short-sea shipping across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region and provides the agricultural and industrial center of the United States with direct access to global markets.

AND WHEREAS the region is the third largest economy in the world, producing US\$9.3 trillion in annual economic output and representing 30 percent of the economic activity in Canada and the United States combined, according to a 2025 report by BMO.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Waterway – which includes both the Seaway and the Lower St. Lawrence River – supports more than 356,000 American and Canadian jobs and generates US\$50.8 billion in economic activity annually, according to a 2023 study by Martin Associates.

AND WHEREAS the Seaway is widely believed to be operating at far less than its total capacity, with a senior U.S. official testifying before the U.S. Congress in 2007 that the Seaway was operating at an estimated 50-60 percent of its total capacity.

AND WHEREAS expanded marine transportation can strengthen supply chains, reduce roadway congestion and create new economic opportunities for communities across the region.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's *Economic Transformation Action Plan*, released in September 2025, sets forth a mayor-led vision for leveraging the region's comparative advantages to build the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor, attracting 500,000 new industries and creating more than 18 million new jobs over the next decade while safeguarding our precious freshwater resources.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative's Action Plan recommends expanding maritime commerce on the Seaway by 30 percent over the next decade, recognizing the opportunity for the regional economy to become the fastest growing in North America by enabling safer, more cost effective and more sustainable movement of goods through the Seaway and an integrated, intermodal network.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. federal government is already taking positive actions to enhance the Seaway's operational capacity, with planned container terminals at Ports of Indiana-Burns Harbor and the Port of Monroe.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes states – including Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin – have enacted maritime strategies that acknowledge the centrality of the Seaway to their economic futures and support modernization efforts.

AND WHEREAS continued effective collaboration among municipalities; Tribes; the federal government; Great Lakes states and the maritime sector is necessary to unlock additional maritime growth in a sustainable and locally beneficial manner.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative supports a coordinated, binational effort to expand maritime commerce on the Seaway by 30 percent over the next decade and will continue to work to achieve this outcome through its Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation.
- The Cities Initiative encourages the U.S. federal government to prioritize strategic investments in container terminals; customs clearance; port modernization and multimodal transportation networks.
- The Cities Initiative further supports efforts to expand cruise tourism, passenger mobility and other waterborne transportation modes wherever locally appropriate.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy; U.S. Department of Transportation General Counsel Greg Zerzan and Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation Administrator J. M. (Mike) McCoshen.