

A Resolution Submitted by the City of Cobourg, ON



ADVANCING SWIMMABLE CITIES FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

May 2026

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region contains one of the largest freshwater systems in the world and this fresh water is fundamental to the environmental health, economic vitality, cultural identity and quality of life of the communities that depend on it.

AND WHEREAS Canadian municipalities across the region are increasingly advancing water quality improvements and waterfront revitalization initiatives that reconnect residents to their local waterways and support healthier, more livable urban and rural communities.

AND WHEREAS the region's First Nations and Tribes maintain enduring relationships with water as a living relative, and their languages, knowledge systems and stewardship strengthens collective connection to place and reconciliation.

AND WHEREAS long-standing regional and binational commitments demonstrate an ongoing shared responsibility to swimmable, drinkable and fishable waters, continuing to provide an enduring foundation for freshwater protection, restoration and public trust.

AND WHEREAS the global Swimmable Cities initiative is boosting urban livability by promoting public access to safe, healthy and swimmable waterways, with swim sites recognized as green infrastructure and ecosystems valued for their diverse benefits.

AND WHEREAS cities around the world have demonstrated that strategic investment in water quality, governance reform and public access can successfully restore urban waterways and unlock new social benefits through public health, urban cooling, climate resilience and social equity, as well as environmental benefits through pollution reduction, biodiversity increases and improvements in waterway health.

AND WHEREAS advancing swimmable waterways can support local economies by enhancing waterfront activation and creating opportunities for water-based recreation, culture and tourism across the basin, attracting visitors, workforce talent and sustainable industry.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative/Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent affirms the importance of swimmable waterways as a meaningful indicator of waterfront transformation for the social, ecological and economic prosperity of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence communities.
- The Cities Initiative encourages continued municipal leadership and collaboration to advance fair-to-good water quality outcomes, building on existing restoration efforts to improve conditions for swimming, recreation and ecosystem health across the region.
- The Cities Initiative supports waterfront activation strategies that integrate urban swimming infrastructure as an innovative way to improve public access, recreation and placemaking with environmental protection, climate resilience and community safety.
- The Cities Initiative, in partnership with the Biinaagami initiative, encourages all member municipalities to consider collaborating with local First Nations and Tribes on the dual-naming of at least one accessible waterfront site, in an effort to acknowledge the Original Peoples of the Territory, their language and their deep connection to the waters and to recognize that caring for the waters within the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin is a shared responsibility.
- The Cities Initiative recognizes the potential for regional collaboration on freshwater recreation and tourism as a means to celebrate shared waters, promote healthy lifestyles and support local economies while respecting ecological health.
- The Cities Initiative will continue to engage its member municipalities and partners to share best practices and strengthen local capacity through peer-to-peer learning, as well as elevate Great Lakes-St. Lawrence perspectives in broader conversations on swimmable, resilient and people-centered waterways, including in partnership with the global Swimmable Cities initiative and Swim Drink Fish Canada.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Julie Dabrusin; the Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Todd McCarthy and the Quebec Minister of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Pascale Déry.