A Resolution Submitted by Contrecœur, QC

IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COASTAL PROTECTION IN THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN

May 2024

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin is the largest freshwater ecosystem in the world, home to more than 40 million people, including nearly one-third of Canada's population, with tens of thousands of kilometres of shoreline.

AND WHEREAS the vast extent of these rivers and lakes offers a great diversity of environments and therefore of situations, responding differently to external variations.

AND WHEREAS the basin is a strategic trade corridor, a tourism destination and an exceptional location for recreational boating activities.

AND WHEREAS the new climate following the changes of recent decades creates new challenges due to the reduction in the freezing periods of lakes and rivers, resulting in a greater risk of erosion, as well as new climatic episodes – such as rain in winter on frozen ground –that cause flooding.

AND WHEREAS these erosion issues are also caused by human activities – such as recreational boating and commercial shipping – and that their impact differs depending on the environment and zone.

AND WHEREAS these new challenges imply more action by the various levels of government, including an important role for municipalities while raising the need to adapt infrastructure and interventions to local situations, different stretches of the river and best practices supported by scientific research on their effectiveness.

AND WHEREAS major efforts have been made to protect coasts through research chairs supporting evidence-based policies, focusing on saltwater environments at the federal level with the Canada Research Chair on Coastal Processes.

AND WHEREAS municipal action in terms of water management is increasingly recognized, as evidenced by the new research chair on sustainable water management, by municipalities created by the *Fédération québécoise des municipalités.*

AND WHEREAS the recent additional commitment of $420 million from the Canadian federal government and the establishment of a $500 million Blue Fund for the protection of the basin's freshwater resources are important contributions to the protection of our environments and the aquatic resources that sustain our communities.

AND WHEREAS the new Canadian Water Agency, created by the Government of Canada, will play an important role in collecting and disseminating data on our waterways, as well as coordinating with other levels of government.

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada's investments in the Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program are a step in the right direction, but do not take into account the risks of erosion and the situation in our waterways.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative make representations to the federal government to advance the following requests:

    - Work with the Ministry of Public Safety, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and the Canadian Water Agency to adopt a more holistic approach to flood management, going beyond flood risk data and including more comprehensive data on erosion

    - Support these objectives with the production of evidence-based, independent and policy-relevant research through the establishment of a Canada Research Chair in Freshwater, including issues of erosion due to climate change and human activities

    - Support the development of mitigation measures and the investments required in the infrastructures identified by these scientific data

- The Cities Initiative proposes and defends the idea of a major study of the basin along the following lines:

    - Identification of sections, i.e., areas identified as having similar issues and configuration

- For each section, identify the issues relating to the natural environment, climate change and human activities that could disrupt the environment and establish a series of evidence-based measures that could have a convincing positive impact

- Estimation of ecosystem costs and contributions in order to quantify the benefits of natural environments for our communities and guide decisions that could have an impact on them

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: relevant federal and provincial ministries, community organizations and other organizations active in the basin and aiming to preserve its ecosystems and communities.