GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

A Resolution Submitted by the City of Sheboygan, WI

City of Sheboygan
spirit on the lake

SUPPORTING THE GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE ACT OF 2024

May 2024

WHEREAS the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was enacted in 2010 to support freshwater restoration and protection efforts in key Great Lakes communities, addressing toxic substances and areas of concern (AOCs), invasive species, nonpoint source pollution and habitats and species.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Congress has since appropriated $5.54 billion for the GLRI since Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, including $1 billion via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for FY22-FY26, making this the single largest investment ever made in preserving the Great Lakes' freshwater resources.

AND WHEREAS 15 different federal agencies use the GLRI to strategically target threats to Great Lakes ecosystems and communities, resulting in over 7,500 projects conducted since 2010 in close collaboration with municipalities and community leaders.

AND WHEREAS a 2018 study from the University of Michigan found that every $1 of GLRI funding spent locally from 2010-2016 will generate an estimated $3.35 in ancillary economic activity through 2036, and that GLRI projects were responsible for creating thousands of jobs, increasing freshwater tourism and enhancing quality of life for residents.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has since administered the GLRI and anticipates completing restoration activities at 22 of 25 remaining environmentally-degraded AOCs by the year 2030.

AND WHEREAS the GLRI Act of 2019 was passed with bipartisan support and enacted in 2021 to reauthorize the GLRI and increase authorized spending by $25 million per year until FY26.

AND WHEREAS growing challenges like climate change, coastal erosion, severe weather, emerging contaminants and increased habitat degradation threaten to undermine the progress of the GLRI if continued federal investments are not made.

AND WHEREAS the GLRI Act of 2024 was introduced in February 2024 by the bipartisan leadership of the Great Lakes Task Force, which includes: Senator Debbie Stabenow (Michigan); Senator J.D. Vance (Ohio); Rep. David Joyce (OH-14); Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI-06); Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-04) and Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH-09).

AND WHEREAS the GLRI Act of 2024 would reauthorize the program through FY31 and increase authorized spending from $475 million to $500 million annually.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has officially endorsed the GLRI Act of 2024.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative's delegation at Great Lakes Day in Washington, D.C. in March 2024 called on Congress to pass this critical legislation as expeditiously as possible.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- Congress should provide $450 million for the GLRI via the FY25 appropriations process – the maximum authorized funding level for that year – in addition to the supplemental $200 million included for FY25 in the IIJA

- Congress should approve the GLRI Act of 2024 to extend the program's authorization for an additional five years and increase the authorized spending to $500 million annually for FY26-FY31

- EPA should continue to collaborate with federal and state agencies, Great Lakes communities and other key stakeholders to support the full restoration and revitalization of coastal communities, both in and out of designated AOCs

- Cities Initiative members are dedicated to working with federal, state and local partners and with neighboring communities to accelerate the cleanup and delisting of AOCs

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: Michael Regan, Administrator, EPA; the Great Lakes National Program Office, EPA and select members of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee and the Great Lakes Task Force.