



RESOLUTION
Adopted October 7, 2016

Providing and maintaining clean water infrastructure and services in the Great Lakes Basin

Whereas, aging water infrastructure across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region can compromise the region's ability to deliver safe and sustainable drinking water as well as manage wastewater and stormwater in ways that support thriving economies and ecosystems; and

Whereas, the American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the \$91 billion capital investment required to maintain and upgrade drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in the U.S. in 2010 will increase to \$195 billion if action is deferred to 2040,¹ and that the inclusion of capital investment costs required for stormwater infrastructure raises the estimate to over \$1.3 trillion² over the same timeframe; and

Whereas, the majority of the nation's water systems are between 50 and 150 years old and many municipalities are unable to meet rising costs;³ and

Whereas, billions of gallons⁴ of combined or untreated sewage and stormwater are currently released into the Great Lakes each year from outdated and aging infrastructure that remains prevalent in several of the Great Lakes region's largest cities as well as in many smaller municipalities; and

Whereas, green infrastructure⁵ has shown promise to reduce the anticipated costs of maintaining and upgrading stormwater infrastructure and alleviating some of the burden on existing grey infrastructure while providing complementary economic, environmental and societal benefits; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission resolution *Healing the fractured urban water cycle through integrated water management*, adopted September 2015,⁶ acknowledges broad agreement among municipal, provincial, and state experts in the Great Lakes region on the need to integrate drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure on a watershed basis; and

¹ 2013. American Society of Civil Engineers. *Failure to Act: The Impact of Current Infrastructure Investment on America's Economic Future*. Retrieved from http://www.asce.org/uploadedFiles/Issues_and_Advocacy/Our_Initiatives/Infrastructure/Content_Pieces/failure-to-act-economic-impact-summary-report.pdf

² 2016. National League of Cities. *Paying for local infrastructure in a new era of federalism*. Retrieved from http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/City-Solutions-and-Applied-Research/NLC_2016_Infrastructure_Report.pdf

³ 2012. American Water Works Association. *Buried No Longer: Confronting America's Water Infrastructure Challenge*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/files/legreg/documents/BuriedNoLonger.pdf>

⁴ 2012. Alliance for the Great Lakes. *Reducing Combined Sewer Overflows in the Great lakes*. Retrieved from <http://bnriverkeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/AGL-Reducing-CSO-13-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ Green Infrastructure is a broad term that includes interconnected natural systems and ecological processes to maintain or mimic the natural water cycle across a wide range of land developments. Green infrastructure can provide clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat. It includes natural areas such as grasslands, forests, wetlands and riparian areas. It also includes manmade features such as rain gardens, green roofs, porous pavement, constructed wetlands and berms, riparian buffers, and parks.

⁶ Adopted by unanimous vote.

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission resolution *Maintaining safe and sustainable drinking water and infrastructure in the Great Lakes Basin*, adopted July 2016,⁷ identifies additional challenges and opportunities specifically with respect to drinking water infrastructure.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that investments in clean water infrastructure should complement efforts to protect source water while enhancing practices that work toward restoring or recreating natural hydrologic processes; and that the Great Lakes Commission expand the scope of the working group called for in the July 2016 resolution, *Maintaining safe and sustainable drinking water and infrastructure in the Great Lakes Basin*, to consider all clean water infrastructure (i.e., drinking water infrastructure, wastewater, stormwater and green infrastructure); and to provide advice to guide staff in the preparation of a report on the state of water infrastructure in the Great Lakes and, where appropriate, the St. Lawrence River basin that addresses topics identified in the resolution as well as similar topics for other types of clean water infrastructure. The working group should, where appropriate:

- Explore and assess opportunities to raise awareness of the infrastructure needed to support all clean water services, including drinking, waste and stormwater management;
- Explore the scope and depth of the financial challenge facing the region's governments to meet all of its water infrastructure needs;
- Based on the working group's findings, recommend modifications to laws and policies as may be necessary to ensure that federal water infrastructure investments are a) strategically prioritized based on regional risks and needs; b) provide adequate flexibility and authority to states, provinces and cities; c) address drinking, waste and stormwater management challenges simultaneously; and d) facilitate or drive innovation and use of technologies to increase operational efficiencies in the movement and management of drinking water, stormwater and wastewater; and
- Make other recommendations at future meetings of the Great Lakes Commission based on findings of the working group.

Be It Finally Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament to increase strategic federal water infrastructure funding to complement funding from states, provinces and local municipalities to adequately meet the needs of providing all clean water services (e.g., drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater).

⁷ All jurisdictions voted in favor except Ohio, which opposed the resolution because of a desire to focus more on infrastructure and less on lead issues.