

RESOLUTION  
Adopted Feb. 25, 2015

## Issues surrounding crude oil transportation in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are international treasures, and environmental and economic assets of vital importance to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River states and provinces, as well as the countries of the United States and Canada as a whole; and

**Whereas**, more than 48 million Americans and Canadians depend on and use the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River for drinking water, recreation, manufacturing of products, power generation, and commercial fishing and navigation, among other benefits; and

**Whereas**, the petroleum industry is vital to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region economy; and

**Whereas**, there has been a tremendous increase in crude oil production in recent years, particularly from the Bakken formation in North Dakota and from oil sands in Alberta, Canada; and

**Whereas**, there has been a significant increase in the volume of crude oil transported through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region, with a potentially larger increase forthcoming; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin is a fragile, highly sensitive ecosystem, especially along the shorelines and in nearshore areas, that includes some of the most productive freshwater wetlands in the world; and

**Whereas**, because of the value and fragility of these freshwater ecosystems, an oil spill of any magnitude has the potential to create significant harm to the environment, human health and the economy, including to sustainable industries that create jobs and contribute billions of dollars to the regional economy and depend upon the Great Lakes ecosystem for their livelihood; and

**Whereas**, several crude oil spills occurred in North America in recent years, some of them having major impacts on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region (Talmadge Creek pipeline spill, Marshall, Mich. – 2010, Lac-Mégantic train derailment, Québec - 2013), which together created a need to better understand the extent and nature of safety issues surrounding the transportation of crude oil by all modes, including those that have not been the cause of recent incidents; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes Commission, reacting to these accidents, took action at its 2013 Annual Meeting and directed its staff to prepare an issue brief evaluating the potential benefits, risks and mitigation options surrounding the transportation of crude oil in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region, including an assessment of the regulatory structure in the two countries, and states and provinces; and

**Whereas**, the staff has completed a final report, titled *Summary of Issues and Trends Surrounding the Movement of Crude Oil in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Region*, along with four issue briefs that provide important information regarding oil extraction, movement, risks and benefits of the different modes of transport, and recent legal, policy and regulatory developments; and

**Whereas**, this report was completed following a 60-day comment period during which comments were received from Commissioners, Observers and other regional partners; and

**Whereas**, staff has reviewed the comments received and has edited and completed the report accordingly based on those comments.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission formally receives the report and the four issue briefs as written and, to ensure that the report and briefs remain current and accurate, will continue to receive comments from its members and other stakeholders for the record and for consideration to assist the Commission in its future deliberations on next steps in this area, and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that in addition to accepting further comments on the report from interested stakeholders, the Commission will work to develop a series of recommendations that addresses the environmental and economic imperatives of this issue; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that in order to accomplish these tasks, the Board will appoint and oversee a subcommittee with balanced representation of government and stakeholder interest, and would include representatives of:

- Commissioners/Associate Commissioners;
- the GLC's Economic Committee;
- elected government officials;
- environmental organizations; and
- industry

**Be It Finally Resolved**, that the subcommittee will present recommendations for the Board's consideration, and which the Board will present to Commissioners at the next annual or semiannual meeting.