

Adopted Sept. 30, 2009

Resolution: The Water Energy-Nexus: Linking Water and Energy Planning in the Great Lakes

Whereas, water and energy are inextricably linked; and

Whereas, ensuring clean safe water requires large amounts of energy to supply, purify, distribute, and treat water and wastewater; and

Whereas, approximately 80 percent of municipal costs associated with water processing and distribution are for the energy (electricity) alone; and

Whereas, supplying energy requires large amounts of water and impacts Great Lakes water quality, water quantity and water-dependent natural resources;

Whereas, thermoelectric power plants that burn fossil fuels (e.g., coal, natural gas or petroleum) are the largest source of energy in the Great Lakes, which represented 70 percent of the region's electric supply in 2006; and accounted for nearly 75 percent of all water use in the Great Lakes basin in 2004, excluding hydropower; and

Whereas, electricity is expected to meet a large portion of the region's anticipated additional power generation in light of projected long-term demographic shifts and economic growth coupled with the threat of global climate change and mounting pressure for greater U.S. energy security; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region's vast supply of freshwater makes it particularly attractive for water-intensive energy production and potentially competing demands on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River water resources; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact require new and existing water withdrawals to demonstrate efficient use of water resources; and

Whereas, energy planning and water planning are currently done separately, compromising the region's ability to effectively evaluate and plan for future water and energy needs.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission supports the establishment of new protocols and management models that engage water resources management and energy generation in consultative planning processes; and

Be it further resolved, that Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River state and provincial water resource planning agencies should be consulted early in the planning process to evaluate and make recommendations concerning water use by the energy sector (including, fossil-fuel fired power, nuclear, refining and biofuels plants) to achieve water efficiencies and conservation objectives as envisioned by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact; and



Be it further resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on federal agencies in the United States and Canada, including the U.S. EPA, Department of Interior (USGS) the U.S. Department of Energy, and Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to collaborate with each other and consult with the Great Lakes states and provinces concerning energy and water policies; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission stands ready to help position the region as a global center for clean water, renewable energy and energy efficient technologies.