

RESOLUTION  
Adopted October 7, 2016

## Endorsing and supporting implementation of the Governors' and Premiers' Maritime Strategy

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transportation system (MTS) has been and continues to be vital to the regional economy of the United States and Canada by facilitating domestic and international trade through the movement of goods and commodities and historically supporting industries such as manufacturing, steel production, agribusiness and power generation; and

**Whereas**, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence MTS is the largest deep-draft inland navigation system in the world, encompassing the five Great Lakes, their connecting channels and the St. Lawrence River, extending 2,300 miles (3680 kilometers) into the North American heartland, and serving more than 100 ports in the eight Great Lakes states, Ontario, and Québec; and

**Whereas**, the MTS includes vessel operators and ports and a range of other activities, such as ship building and repair, warehousing, piloting and stevedoring, that collectively contribute more than \$33 billion<sup>1</sup> to the U.S. and Canadian economies and generate more than 226,000 jobs,<sup>2</sup> with the potential for future growth consistent with global and regional trends, and the maritime mode saves an estimated \$3.6 billion annually in transportation costs compared to the next cheapest option;<sup>3</sup> and

**Whereas**, the MTS has under-utilized capacity and faces numerous challenges, including seasonal constraints, limited multi-modal connections in a number of locations and an exclusive reliance on a small number of bulk commodities in some sections of the system; inadequate investment in dredging and infrastructure; and shortcomings in governance and overall system optimization and competitiveness; and

**Whereas**, the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers recently completed a comprehensive *Strategy for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Maritime Transportation System* (the Strategy) that aims to double maritime trade, improve environmental performance and support the region's industrial core; and

**Whereas**, the Strategy establishes a Regional Maritime Entity to coordinate actions directed at four objectives:

- Increasing efficiency and reducing costs;
- Building new markets;
- Growing economic activity around the maritime system;
- Delivering results while managing for the future; and

**Whereas**, with its mandate to support the balanced use of Great Lakes water resources and its longstanding role as an advocate for environmentally sustainable Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transportation, the Great Lakes Commission is uniquely qualified to support implementation of the new maritime strategy in collaboration with the Great Lakes States and Provinces, federal governments, maritime industry partners, and others; and

**Whereas**, sustainability and environmental performance are two of the MTS's greatest strengths, and acknowledging that the Strategy's goal is to double maritime trade while shrinking the environmental impact of the region's transportation network.

*Presented by the Board of Directors for consideration at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, Oct. 6-7, 2016 in Toronto, Ontario.*

**Therefore, Be It Resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission endorses and pledges to support implementation of the maritime strategy wherever possible in collaboration with its member jurisdictions, the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the federal governments, maritime industry, and other appropriate partners; and

**Be It Further Resolved,** that in the short term the Commission will support implementation of specific recommendations from the Strategy related to establishing a maritime careers portal, maintaining the maritime asset inventory, managing data and information to track progress in implementing the strategy, and aligning data collection and reporting with the Blue Accounting initiative, as appropriate; and

**Be it Finally Resolved,** that the Commission calls on its member States and Provinces, the U.S. and Canadian federal governments, and partners in the maritime industry to support implementation of the Strategy, where appropriate, by participating on the Regional Maritime Entity and its advisory committee, providing data and information to maintain the maritime asset inventory and track progress toward achieving the Strategy's goals, and advancing policies and devoting resources to better leverage and grow the MTS to support a strong economy and healthy environment in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Impacts of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System*, Martin Associates, October 2011

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> *Great Lakes Navigation System: Economic Strength to the Nation*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, March 2013