

Adopted Oct. 12, 2011

## **Resolution: Promoting Adaptive Management in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Region Through Better Coordination of Data and Information**

**Whereas**, managers and decisionmakers in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region are beginning to research and advance means to promote adaptive management, which implies a commitment to monitoring, modeling, observing changes and regularly evaluating strategies to manage resources in light of uncertainty and new conditions; and

**Whereas**, adaptive management has many benefits including planning for uncertainty due to changing water levels; climate change; coastal hazard assessment and reduction; planning for coastal infrastructure improvements and resiliency; aiding commercial navigation, flood mitigation and water resources management, among others; and

**Whereas**, adaptive management will be important and highly relevant to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Sustainable Water Resources Agreement and Compact, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and other Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River initiatives; and

**Whereas**, the International Joint Commission's International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLS) established an Adaptive Management (AM) Working Group to identify risks associated with high and low water regimes; and

**Whereas**, a presentation was provided at the Great Lakes Commission's 2010 Annual Meeting describing the IUGL Study Board's approach to adaptive management and requesting state and provincial involvement in the process; and

**Whereas**, representatives from state and provincial government are participating with the AM Working Group to identify priorities for adaptive management and to help develop and review recommendations on adaptive management to be included in the a report to the IUGL Study Board; and

**Whereas**, many of the building blocks for an effective adaptive management program for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River are in place and can be accelerated through the designation of an entity or agency to help facilitate and coordinate programmatic advancements, outreach efforts and data and information sharing; and

**Whereas**, the draft AM Working Group report has been completed, which includes several findings and conclusions related to the development of an adaptive management strategy for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin; and

**Whereas**, one of the key elements of an adaptive management strategy identified by the AM Working Group is the need for better coordinated data and information related to hydroclimate and adaptation (and related socio-economic and ecosystem impact data); and

**Whereas**, the IJC with its mandate and authority to address issues related to the management of lake levels and flows under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, has been identified by the AM Working Group as an institution well-suited to implement an adaptive management strategy for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River; and

**Whereas**, the AM Working Group is recommending that the IJC establish a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Management Advisory Board to implement and coordinate an adaptive management process for the region.

**Therefore, be it resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission affirms the importance of a coordinated approach to adaptive management to mitigate the effects of changes to the land and water resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin and to promote other benefits of adaptive management related to water resources management and improving infrastructure in coastal communities to reduce coastal hazards; and

**Be it further resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission applauds the IJC for its leadership in advancing the state of knowledge of adaptive management through its outreach campaign under the IUGLS and reminds the IJC of the need to coordinate its adaptive management efforts with the Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River (LOSLR) Working Group as well as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement renegotiation process; and

**Be it further resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission offers its support to the IJC and the IUGL Study Board to identify an appropriate entity and process (such as a water quantity advisory board) to advise the IJC and its Boards of Control regarding adaptively managing for extremes in levels and flows fluctuations and to provide a more coordinated approach to adaptive management that recognizes the full range of benefits of adaptive management; and

**Be it further resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission calls for the development and maintenance of critical information on hydroclimate, water levels changes and other decision support tools for adaptive management to be provided through an entity that is responsive to the needs of the region including the Great Lakes states and provinces; and

**Be it further resolved,** that adaptive management should be given greater priority and attention under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) especially through the Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP) process; and

**Be it further resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission calls for the development and convening of an adaptive management conference or symposium to help its members understand the state of knowledge of adaptive management and identify regional priorities for adaptive management; and

**Be it finally resolved,** that the Great Lakes Commission calls upon the federal governments of the U.S. and Canada to provide federal agencies with a role in adaptive management and to provide support and technical assistance to the states and provinces, to help them establish, refine and implement effective and better coordinated adaptive management programs for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin.