



Adopted Sept. 9, 2013

Preventing pollution from persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals in the Great Lakes ecosystem

Whereas, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are binational treasures and environmental and economic assets of vital importance to the eight Great Lakes states, two provinces, and the North American economy; and

Whereas, the environmental and economic viability of the Great Lakes states and provinces is linked to a healthy Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem, which among other benefits, provides drinking water and recreational opportunities including fishing and hunting; and

Whereas, pollution associated with persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals, such as dioxins, mercury, PCBs and PBDEs can result in significant ecological impacts (i.e., carcinogenic effects, and adverse effects on the immune, reproductive, nervous or endocrine systems) with potential to impose significant economic and societal costs and potentially compromising the ability of the Great Lakes ecosystem to continue to provide the aforementioned opportunities and benefits; and

Whereas, substances such as PCBs continue to cause ecological harm long after being banned; and

Whereas, the United States and Canada have jointly signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement, and the Great Lakes Toxic Substances Control Agreement to control transboundary transport and effects of pollution, and to cooperate on research and development projects to reduce or eliminate the use and release of chemicals of mutual concern; and

Whereas, industry, municipalities and users of chemicals have made great strides in reducing the use and release of persistent chemicals, through voluntary and regulatory approaches; and

Whereas, largely due to limitations in the U.S. Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), only a fraction of the hundreds of contaminants detected in the Great Lakes ecosystem has been evaluated for their potential toxic effects on wildlife and human health; and

Whereas, governments and industries in Canada, the European Union, and a number of U.S. states have made significant advances to reduce the use of PBTs and promote green chemistry through policy measures, private investments and academic research; and

Whereas, there is a growing market demand for safer chemicals; and

Whereas, as evidenced by the American Chemistry Council's policy position on TSCA Modernization, the chemical industry acknowledges the need for TSCA reform in order to promote public confidence in the safety of chemicals and to create a more predictable business environment.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission urges the U.S. Congress to adopt comprehensive national legislation aimed at minimizing human and ecosystem exposure to PBTs through reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act; and

Be it further resolved, that federal legislation should not preempt measures at subnational levels; and

Be it further resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission supports additional governmental policy, private sector actions, and research efforts in the United States and Canada aimed at reducing the manufacture, processing, use and release of substances that are persistent and bioaccumulative; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission urges the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to develop, in consultation with states and provinces, effective programs to prevent pollution from PBTs through Annex 3 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Protocol of 2012 (Chemicals of Mutual Concern).