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**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE**
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

**Transforming the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin into a Thriving Blue-Green Economic Corridor While Safeguarding Our Freshwater Resources
May 2024**

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin forms the largest freshwater ecosystem in the world, providing drinking water to more than 40 million people and serving as the foundation of our communities' economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS basin communities collectively comprise the world's third largest economy, generating \$6 trillion in economic output annually; and

WHEREAS heavy industry and manufacturing has predominated in parts of the basin, often degrading our water quality and perpetuating environmental challenges in disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS basin-wide ecosystem restoration efforts are yielding significant economic dividends for local communities; and

WHEREAS the U.S. federal government's \$4.17-billion investment in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative since 2010 and the Canadian federal government's recent commitment of \$420 million are two important contributors to this virtuous circle between environmental protection and sustainable economic development; and

WHEREAS some experts anticipate climate-related migration to basin communities to grow as conditions worsen in arid and coastal environments in Canada and the United States, with freshwater access being a major advantage; and

WHEREAS Canadian and U.S. residents are increasingly keen to live, work, invest and play in vibrant communities with ample access to environmentally-friendly lifestyles, jobs, development and recreation; and

WHEREAS the blue economy is growing exponentially, with the basin's freshwater catalyzing increased economic opportunities for innovative businesses, waterfront revitalization and the cruise and shipping industries; and

WHEREAS the green economy is growing quickly, with sustainable industries on track to see revenues exceed \$5 trillion by 2025, with consumers across all ages and demographics increasingly demanding green products and services; and

WHEREAS federal, state and provincial governments in Canada and the United States are beginning to take bold action to drive blue-green economic transformation; and

WHEREAS in Canada, the federal government is developing a Blue Economy Strategy to encourage economic innovation and investment in shoreline communities, as well as make progress on decarbonization goals; and

WHEREAS Ontario recently outlined a comprehensive approach to harness the potential of the marine sector for economic, environmental and social benefits in the province, complementing the Québec government's maritime strategy; and

WHEREAS in the United States, the federal government is investing billions of dollars to enhance coastal resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and nurture the creation of new green and blue industries; and

WHEREAS Illinois and Michigan are two Great Lakes states that are establishing themselves as leaders in the clean-energy revolution, having signed into state law ambitious plans to expand clean and renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs in the climate sector; and

WHEREAS building a thriving freshwater economy requires attracting green and blue industries to foster job creation and climate and water innovation; harnessing clean, accessible waterfronts as drivers of economic revitalization and equitable communities; implementing clean and renewable energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build livable communities; and expanding sustainable, integrated, water-borne commerce, mobility and tourism; and

WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative was founded in 2003 as a coalition of local elected leaders working collaboratively to promote the economic, environmental and social health of basin communities, making the Cities Initiative the ideal organization to facilitate sustainable, resilient and inclusive economic development while safeguarding our freshwater resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative will launch the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation at its Annual Conference in Montréal, QC, May 15-17, 2024, to promote sustainable, resilient and inclusive economic development basin-wide and appropriate freshwater stewardship for the benefit of current and future generations
- The Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation will develop the *Action Plan for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Economic Transformation, 2025-2035*, a roadmap for basin communities to capitalize on this historic moment to become a globally-renowned, blue-green economic corridor, which will be released at the Cities Initiative's next Annual Conference in Milwaukee, WI, in May 2025
- The *Action Plan for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Economic Transformation, 2025-2035* will map paths for municipal action to support the following:
 - Industrial Transformation: attracting green and blue industries to foster job creation and climate and water innovation while protecting the basin's unparalleled freshwater ecosystem

- Energy Transformation: implementing clean and renewable energy sources to respond to the expected growth in clean energy consumption for businesses, industries and residents
- Transportation Transformation: expanding sustainable, integrated and water-borne commerce, mobility and tourism
- Waterfront Transformation: developing shorelines intentionally by weaving together multiple uses, including residential and recreation, to create accessible and thriving economic centers

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake pledge to work closely with the Cities Initiative and its members to guide the Mayors Commission on Economic Transformation and advance its mission.