

June 14, 2023

CL 8-2023, May 18, 2023

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SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Motion respecting Enhancing Canada's National Adaptation Strategy Through a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Coastal Resiliency Study

Regional Council, at its meeting held on May 18, 2023, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS climate change is a clear and present danger to communities, residents and businesses across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin;

WHEREAS climate adaptation and disaster mitigation and response in Canada are shared responsibilities between municipal, provincial/territorial, federal and Indigenous governments and agencies;

WHEREAS the Canadian side of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River has more than 10,000 km of shoreline which are at increasing risk of flooding, erosion and severe storm impacts;

WHEREAS municipalities are frontline actors that will bear the most costs for adapting their infrastructure and communities, while having access to the least amount of resources to fund these activities;

WHEREAS improving coastal resilience in the basin has been identified as a key priority of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative;

WHEREAS the Cities Initiative completed a coastal resilience needs assessment survey in 2021 that received more than 300 responses from local governments in Canada and the U.S. which revealed that the participating communities would spend a cumulative \$2.56 billion over the next five years to respond to coastal hazards impacting their shorelines, with more than \$320 million in planned investments for Ontario and Quebec respondents, a fraction of the total amount all communities in the basin will need to spend over the coming years to protect their shoreline communities;

WHEREAS a follow-up survey issued in 2022 found that the majority of local governments that responded anticipate having to each spend more than \$1 million to address coastal hazards impacting their shorelines between now and 2026;

WHEREAS a 2019 report by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Insurance Bureau of Canada found that avoiding the worst impacts of climate change at the municipal level will cost an estimated \$5.3 billion per year shared among all three orders of government;

WHEREAS in response to this issue being a priority for the organization and its members, a Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience was established with Canadian and U.S. members to identify sustainable workable solutions to address coastal erosion, flooding and storm impacts;

WHEREAS in 2022, the Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience issued its recommendations calling for the Government of Canada to partner with the Ontario and Quebec governments to accelerate the development of regional shoreline adaptation plans across the basin;

WHEREAS the Cities Initiative is a key partner in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative which developed the Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence 2020-2030 that recommends for enhancing shoreline climate adaptation in the basin;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada released its final draft National Adaptation Strategy in fall 2022, with a commitment of a \$1.6 billion “down payment” to support the implementation of the strategy;

WHEREAS the Cities Initiative welcomes the investments made in the National Adaptation Strategy, namely the top up funding for the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, the new Climate Resilient Coastal and Northern Communities Program pilot and the investments in flood mapping to ensure that all Canadians have access to free, up-to-date and authoritative flood-hazard maps;

WHEREAS the funding announced for the National Adaptation Strategy represents only a fraction of the total investment that will be necessary by all levels of government;

WHEREAS flood mapping, though a critical tool for communities and residents across the basin, represents only one measure of coastal resilience and that a more comprehensive assessment will need to be completed to assist all levels of government in prioritizing shoreline adaptation measures and investments;

WHEREAS the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been authorized to complete a Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study (GLCRS) and it has signed a cost-share agreement with the eight Great Lakes States for the estimated \$10.6 million study;

WHEREAS the GLCRS will assess Great Lakes coastal resources over a range of future conditions and develop a watershed plan to support the management of those resources and identify, select and prioritize investments that will promote coastal resilience;

WHEREAS without proper coordination, coastal resilience efforts in the Canadian Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin will be done in an inefficient, inconsistent and piecemeal fashion;

WHEREAS investments announced by the Government of Canada for the National Adaptation Strategy, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River protection and to establish the Canada Water Agency provide a sound foundation on which it can help lead a similar study for shoreline communities in Ontario and Quebec;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has an opportunity to reinforce the National Adaptation Strategy by working with regional actors to identify and address climate change impacts on water levels, erosion, flooding and storm activity in the basin.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative request to the Government of Canada to:
 - a) Designate a multi-ministry team to liaise with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on their GLCRS to determine how Canada can support and learn from the study to improve coastal resilience in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin;
 - b) Designate a budget and develop the scope of a similar study to the GLCRS for the Canadian Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and engage the Governments of Ontario and Quebec to partner, co-fund and execute this work;
 - c) Examine the possibility of having the Canada Water Agency coordinate this Canadian coastal resiliency study in the basin;
 - d) Ensure that municipalities, Indigenous communities and key regional and local watershed stakeholders are also consulted in the development and delivery of this study; and

- e) Build on the investments made in the National Adaptation Strategy to rapidly accelerate federal funding for adaptation measures in Canada, including a dedicated \$1 billion per year enhancement in disaster mitigation and green infrastructure programming.
2. That Regional Council further **ENDORSE** the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative requesting the governments of Ontario and Quebec to support the development of an integrated coastal resiliency study for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and
3. That copies of this resolution **BE CIRCULATED** to the federal Ministers of Environment and Climate Change, Natural Resources, Emergency Preparedness, Fisheries and Oceans, Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities and Transport, as well as the Canada Water Agency Transition Office; Ontario Ministers of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Natural Resources and Forestry, Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs and Housing and Transport; Quebec Ministers of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Public Security, Municipal Affairs, Infrastructure and Transport.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

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CLK-C 2023-064

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