

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee: April 5, 2023

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR A. WILSON.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

Securing Canada's \$1 Billion Investment in a Strengthened Freshwater Action Plan

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton, as a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, supports: protecting source water, planning for climate change impacts and shoreline resilience, ensuring safe and affordable water services for all our residents, and building up a sustainable blue economy in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin;

WHEREAS, ensuring healthy communities and a strong economy for Canadians depend on securing Canada's source water, which includes addressing water quality issues, contaminants and pollution, supporting biodiversity and reversing wetland and fish and wildlife habitat loss and improving community knowledge to empower citizens to safeguard this essential resource;

WHEREAS, a Freshwater Action Plan and the Great Lakes Protection Initiative it supported were first announced in the 2017 Canadian federal budget with a \$44.84 million investment over five years;

WHEREAS, the Freshwater Action Plan has combined science and action to address priorities in the Great Lakes such as preventing toxic and nuisance algae, enhancing the resilience of coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes, restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern and supporting Canada's commitments under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, among other priorities;

WHEREAS, a commitment was made by the Liberal Party of Canada in the 2021 federal election to strengthen the Freshwater Action Plan with an historic investment of \$1 billion over ten years to restore and protect large lakes and river systems starting with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin;

WHEREAS, the federal government only committed \$19.6 million in funding in the 2022 Budget for the Freshwater Action Plan, falling short of the aforementioned commitment.

WHEREAS, the United States has invested \$1.8 billion in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) since 2017 and will see accelerated funding with the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*;

WHEREAS, a 2018 University of Michigan study shows that for every dollar of federal spending on GLRI projects between 2010 and 2016, yielded \$3.35 in additional economic activity;

WHEREAS, nearly half of Canada's population lives in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, a region that will continue to see accelerated growth, resulting in greater land and resource use pressures that will further contribute to water availability and quality issues;

WHEREAS, the [Stockholm Resilience Centre](#) recently identified the importance of wetlands as carbon sinks and fresh water's role in climate mitigation;

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative outlined 30 recommendations to Environment and Climate Change Canada as part of a ten-year, \$2.2 billion [Action Plan 2020-2030 to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence](#) (Action Plan 2020-2030), addressing shoreline erosion, outdated infrastructure, invasive species, exposure to toxins and beach contamination, following an 18-month consultation with First Nations, NGOs, academics and other experts;

WHEREAS, the recommendations outlined in Action Plan 2020-2030 should serve as the basis of programming for strengthened federal action in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin through its strengthened Freshwater Action Plan;

WHEREAS, the newly established Canada Water Agency should play a role in accelerating the rollout of funding made available through a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan;

WHEREAS, Freshwater Action Plan funding should largely be directed to community groups, local governments and First Nations to ensure that investments made will have the biggest local impact and empower action at the local level, rather than being held back for federal administration and operations;

WHEREAS, it is critical to implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including accelerating a \$1 billion over five years, and to creating a Canada Water Agency to consolidate and coordinate federal water efforts and support provinces and territories in addressing systemic issues impacting the viability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and the communities dependent upon the region's source water;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the City of Hamilton calls on the federal government to commit \$1 billion in funding over five years for a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan in Budget 2023;
- (b) That the City of Hamilton calls on the federal government to guide its Freshwater Action Plan funding to implement recommendations in the Action Plan 2020-2030;
- (c) That the City of Hamilton calls on the federal government to direct priority funding under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan to projects in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin;
- (d) That the City of Hamilton calls on the federal government to make municipalities eligible for future funding in programs announced under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan; and,
- (e) That the City of Hamilton directs its staff to submit this resolution to the federal Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Finance; the Minister of Environment and Climate Change; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (responsible for the Canada Water Agency), and local Member of Parliament.