

Chicago, July 16, 2004

Resolution # 6

Presented by: **Richard M. DALEY**, Mayor of Chicago, Illinois

SWIMMING BANS

WHEREAS, annually over 60 million people visit more than 1,000 beaches, 98 state parks, 39 provincial parks, and 12 national parks on the United States and Canadian Great Lakes shores; and

WHEREAS, lakefront tourism is critical to local and regional economies all around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, municipal officials are responsible for providing recreational opportunities and protecting public health of residents and visitors, and

WHEREAS, the number of incidents of Great Lakes beach closures and swimming bans due to high bacteria levels has been increasing dramatically; and

WHEREAS, the sources of bacteria that causes beach closures are numerous, discreet, and often unknown; and

WHEREAS, the current approved method for testing bacteria does not provide results in a timely manner (thus limiting the actual public health protection benefit of beach testing) and is antiquated with respect to the capacity of new technology; and

WHEREAS, there is considerable debate and ongoing research into the correlation between the current recommended standard for closing a beach/issuing a swimming ban and public health risk; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to explore new indicators, beyond e. coli and fecal coliform, that may more accurately detect the presence of harmful bacteria in waterways, and thus more effectively protect public health.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urges the Federal governments of the U.S. and Canada to assist local, state and provincial governments in determining the sources of bacteria in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors support the U.S. EPA in its ongoing effort to investigate the correlation between the level of e.coli bacteria in the water and incidences of illness and encourage EPA to act swiftly to conclude that investigation. This study will help determine if the current standard and indicators used for banning swimming at beaches accurately reflects the risk to the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urge the Federal governments of the U.S. and Canada to approve rapid testing technology in order to provide information about beach status in a more timely manner that is consistent with protecting public health; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors encourage all local leaders to continue to evaluate innovative approaches to beach management and share this information among other officials at all levels of government.

CARRIED