



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

RESOLUTION 18 – 2010M

Support of the Right of Public Passage Along the Shoreline of the Great Lakes
Submitted by the Region of Niagara

WHEREAS, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities have direct responsibilities to protect and promote the Great Lakes in terms of their role in promoting economic development and tourism, providing drinking water and managing sewage and stormwater outflows, regulating land use with an emphasis on protecting wetlands, natural areas, shorelines and tributaries, overseeing waterfront development, creating trail networks and recreational pathways, and operating beaches among other responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative recognizes the importance of ensuring the right of public passage to the shoreline of the Great Lakes, (deemed to include the connecting straights and channels where appropriate), between the water's edge and the high water mark; and

WHEREAS, the ability of the public to access the shorelines of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence is being compromised on a daily basis by way of individuals erecting fences and barriers which extend into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence to prevent the passage of the public along the shoreline; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan has enacted a law, upheld by its Supreme Court in 2005, declaring that all Michigan shoreline in contact with the Great Lakes is public domain from the water's edge to the high water mark; and

WHEREAS, a private member's bill – Bill 43, Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act – has been presented to the Ontario Legislature by MPP Kim Craitor of Niagara, modeled after the Michigan legislation; and

WHEREAS, this legislation acknowledges and affirms that the shoreline has traditionally been and should continue to remain, in the public domain; and

WHEREAS, the right of passage be limited to the right of passage along the shoreline on foot or by other non-mechanized means; and



WHEREAS, public sentiment, including that of many waterfront property owners, is in favor of the public's ability to walk the shorelines; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that the more opportunities there are for the public to enjoy and interact with the beauty and uniqueness of the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence and connecting straights and channels, the more people there will be who recognize and maintain an interest in the need to restore and strengthen them,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative encourages the U.S. and Canadian federal/ provincial, First nations and tribes to work collaboratively with municipal governments and other parties to affirm support of the right of all citizens to walk along the shoreline of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the U.S. and Canadian federal, provincial and local governments to take a leadership role in the education of the general public on the right to access the shoreline of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on the three levels of government to take back into public ownership waterfront properties along the Great Lakes, as they become available to ensure public access for future generations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on all three orders of government to work co-operatively to ensure that the right of pedestrian passage is maintained or secured as part of the development approval process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on all three orders of government to work co-operatively to ensure that any barriers to pedestrian access along the shorelines of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence be considered for remediation to provide access where it does not currently exist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on all three orders of government to work co-operatively to ensure continuous links between the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence shoreline and other existing public pathways and recreational trail networks; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calls on all three orders of government to work co-operatively to erect appropriate signage identifying public access to the Great Lakes shoreline; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative draft a letter supporting the right of all citizens to walk along the shoreline of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and to pursue the endorsement of affiliated organizations and send this letter to applicable federal, state and provincial agencies and legislators, including Ontario MPPs on Bill 43; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, wherever possible, communicate the right to public access along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence shoreline, in order to further promote and enhance investment into Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection, conservation and restoration.

Signed this 17th day of June, 2010

Denis Lapointe, Chair
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield