

Chicago, July 16, 2004

Resolution # 3

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

COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS

WHEREAS, one of the most pressing and most serious issues facing the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region today is combined sewer overflows whereby raw sewage is dumped into waterways during significant storm events; and

WHEREAS, combined sewer overflows may contribute to a range of problems in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence , including beach closures, risks to public health, water quality degradation and increased water treatment costs, to name just a few; and

WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that more than 150 municipalities or sewer districts with combined sewer systems operate on the Great Lakes or on waterways tributary to the Great Lakes, all of which are subject to overflows during significant storm events; and

WHEREAS, there is a well-recognized need for substantial federal investment in water infrastructure upgrades to improve wastewater and stormwater systems so as to help reduce the possibility of future combined sewer overflows during significant storm events; and

WHEREAS, despite the problems caused by combined sewer overflows and the recognized need for infrastructure upgrades to help address this issue, next year's proposed Federal budget in the United States would reduce funding for water infrastructure programs by more than \$500 million nationally and \$170 million in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the proposed federal funding cuts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a new federal policy that would allow for "blending" of wastewater during significant storm events, whereby the release of partially treated and partially untreated wastewater into waterways would be permitted under federal law; and

WHEREAS, cities and towns around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence have been working to develop innovative, alternative methods for managing stormwater, including green infrastructure alternatives such as roof gardens, rain gardens, permeable paving surfaces, reuse of stormwater, and water efficient site design, in an effort to reduce the amount of water going into the sewer system, supplement traditional infrastructure, and help reduce the occurrences or volume of combined sewer overflows;

WHEREAS, cities and towns around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence are very concerned that the proposed federal funding cuts for wastewater infrastructure upgrades and the proposed "blending" policy will serve to undermine ongoing efforts to improve water quality and to prevent future overflows during significant storm events; and

WHEREAS, the vital nature of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence to our environment, economy, and quality of life clearly makes it unacceptable to allow the dumping of raw and partially untreated sewage into them under any circumstance; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urges the U.S. Congress to fully fund all federal programs that support upgrades to water and wastewater treatment systems in United States cities, and the Association will take actions to encourage the U.S. Congress to so act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urges the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to remain committed to the principles of the Clean Water Act by not relaxing discharge standards that would allow “blending” and release of partially treated wastewater into our waterways, and the Association will take actions to encourage the USEPA to so act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urges the U.S. Congress to provide federal funding to help cities implement alternative stormwater management techniques that help reduce pressure on combined sewer systems and therefore mitigate the chances of combined sewer overflows; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors urges the cities and towns of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region to explore and share best management practices for addressing stormwater management and will work during the upcoming year to ensure that such actions occur.

CARRIED