

Mackinac Island, Michigan
June 1, 2013

RESOLUTION

**NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT AND WATER QUALITY IN THE
GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BASIN**

WHEREAS, the waters of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin are a bi-national public treasure; and,

WHEREAS, 78 percent of the assessed continental U.S. coastal areas, including the Great Lakes, exhibit signs of degraded water quality conditions due to excessive nutrient loadings from activities collectively termed nonpoint source pollution; and,

WHEREAS, about one-third of the land in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin is used for agriculture, supporting nearly 25 percent of the total Canadian agricultural production and 7 percent of U.S. production; and,

WHEREAS, a number of initiatives are already being implemented by State and Provincial agencies in addition to those sponsored by various Farm Bureaus, agricultural associations, foundations and other partners to address agricultural nutrient runoff, including best management practices, nutrient reduction strategies and training initiatives; and,

WHEREAS, even with these positive actions, nutrient enrichment, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen from multiple sources including agricultural runoff, urban wastewater and other sources, causes effects harmful to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin including algal blooms, bacterial contaminants and depletion of oxygen in bottom waters of the Great Lakes; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement facilitates United States and Canadian action on threats to Great Lakes water quality including measures to prevent ecological harm and amendments adopted in 2012 include an annex specifically focused on nutrients; and,

WHEREAS, the International Joint Commission assists the United States and Canadian governments in achieving their goals of preventing further pollution in the Great Lakes; and,

WHEREAS, the International Joint Commission has identified reducing phosphorus and algal blooms in Lake Erie as a priority for 2012-2015; and,

WHEREAS, nutrient enrichment affects parts of Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, Green Bay, Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron and various rivers within the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes States, Ontario and Québec have made substantial progress in reducing nutrients in these water bodies; and,

WHEREAS, aquatic invasive species have significantly altered the ecosystem and the cycling of nutrients; and,

WHEREAS, this altered ecosystem and cycling of nutrients needs to be understood to address the Harmful Algal Blooms; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Governors and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec recognize their duty and obligation to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens within their respective jurisdictions.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers call on the governments of the United States and Canada to prioritize scientific research and analysis of this critical issue, and to identify and implement specific steps to reduce harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes Basin.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Great Lakes States and Provinces will continue to work on actions to address nutrient issues, especially from localized nonpoint sources.

Adopted by the Governors of the Great Lakes States and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec on this 1st day of June 2013.