



November 12, 2019

Mayor A Soever
Town of the Blue Mountains
32 Mill Street, PO Box 310
Ontario, NOH 2P0

Dear Mayor Soever and Members of Council

The Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative applauds the Town of the Blue Mountains in declaring a Climate Emergency as part of the municipality's strategy to address the effects of climate change on the businesses and families in their community.

For generations, American and Canadian municipal governments have been at the forefront of protecting the Great Lakes and ensuring that future generations can benefit from this wondrous natural resource. With over 21% of the world's surface freshwater located in the Great Lakes, the actions taken by local governments and the residents along the shoreline can have impacts on the entire region for years to come.

From fluctuating Great Lake water levels, to increased "historic" flooding events, with larger and longer-lasting toxic algal blooms, and the threat of invasive species all threatening the region, how people interact with our Great Lakes is changing. These new and increased threats are costing families, businesses, and communities money as they react and respond after homes have been flooded, businesses lose products and customers, and roads, water plants and other pieces of critical infrastructure are damaged. The cost of reacting to climate change is growing; without a plan to address these challenges it will become increasingly difficult for families to keep their homes safe, businesses to grow and prosper and communities to be successful in the future.

The Great Lakes are also becoming polluted with the pernicious effects of microplastics, phosphorus, and other toxins that are changing the ecological balance for insects, fish, birds, reptiles, small and large mammals and plant life around the Great Lakes region. In order to conserve the pristine water and shoreline that attracts millions of people from around the world to the Great Lakes to live, work, and visit, there are many opportunities for individuals, businesses, and governments to take action.

A recent report by the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities suggests that climate change mitigation will cost \$5.3 billion per year. To address the challenges posed by climate change to the Great Lakes region, the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and their partners within the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative, have released recommendations that can help Canadian Governments start to help the region today, through "Action Plan 2030". To learn more about Action Plan 2030 visit https://gslscities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/GreatLakes-Summary-Print-Single-Page_compressed.pdf.

"Action Plan 2030" asks for \$100 million per year for 10 years from the Government of Canada to protect the Great Lakes environment. Building upon this plan there is an opportunity for municipal governments to develop a local plan to mitigate the effects of climate change in their community. Municipal governments can also leverage their plan for additional funding from other orders of

government, attract new business development, and help ensure local homes and business are safe for generations to come.

Municipal governments are leaders in protecting the environment of the Great Lakes, and the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is eager and willing to support the Town of the Blue Mountains' council and community as you move forward with your endeavours.

Sincerely,



Betty Sutton
President & CEO
Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

cc: Rob Potter & Ken Mehi, Co-chairs
Sustainability Advisory Committee.