

**Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**

**Infrastructure and Engineering Services**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Thomas Kelly, P.Eng., MBA, General Manager  
**Date:** July 7, 2020  
**Subject:** Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative – Stimulus Water Restoration Initiative – Call to Action for Municipal Leaders

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**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the following “Support for Federal Economic Stimulus Investments in Water Resource Priorities for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Communities” resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted the economy of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, with ongoing diminished revenues to municipal governments likely to further constrain public services, prolong economic damage and slow full recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, economists, business leaders and elected officials recognize the need for continued economic stimulus efforts to create jobs, generate long-term economic activity and accelerate the pace of recovery, particularly in hard-hit cities; and

**WHEREAS**, with nearly one-third of United States of America and Canadian economic activity centered in the Great Lakes region, its economic recovery can fuel the larger, national economic recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, investing in water infrastructure is one of the most cost-effective ways to stimulate economic activity, with every job added in the water and wastewater industry projected to create an additional 3.68 jobs in the national economy,

**WHEREAS**, shoreline communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region are heavily impacted by erosion, flooding and other effects from high water levels and extreme weather events; and

**WHEREAS**, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence water levels are at all-time highs and are predicted to persist until the region experiences dry conditions for up to several years; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change is projected to bring more frequent severe storm events that will compound impacts from high water levels, with 100-year storm events already happening every 20 years, on average; and

**WHEREAS**, Ontario and Quebec shoreline communities have experienced more than \$200 million in insurable damages over the past year and members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative have identified over 36 projects requiring approximately \$400 million to repair damage from, and build resilience to, coastal erosion, flooding and other impacts from high lake levels and climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, investments in resilience, mitigation and ecosystem restoration are estimated to return more than \$6.00 for every \$1.00 spent and create 39 jobs per \$1 million spent, and historically, every dollar spent on flood risk management has prevented nearly \$10 in damages; and

**WHEREAS**, the investments outlined above respond to well-documented needs, enjoy broad support and can be administered quickly through existing programs and swiftly generate job growth and new economic activity in our city and others across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent joins with more than 100 mayors and other municipal leaders convened by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to call for continued action to protect 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water and the drinking water source for 40 million people; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent urges its Provincial and Federal Governments to support additional economic stimulus efforts focused on water resource priorities, including:

- \$7 billion in stimulus funding over the next two construction seasons to address
- \$3 billion water infrastructure projects
- \$2 billion for shoreline protection projects in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence
- \$2 billion to address disaster preparation and flood mapping

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, the citizens of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent appreciate the Government of Canada's support provided so far to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and urge further action to ensure a quick and complete economic recovery while addressing urgent needs to rebuild our water infrastructure and protect our shoreline areas.

## **Background**

The governments of Canada and the United States of America (U.S.) are contemplating stimulus packages in an effort to accelerate economic recovery resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLC) is calling on the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to include support for critical water and infrastructure restoration priorities in upcoming economic stimulus legislation.

The GLSLC initiative consists of Mayors whose population and economy relies on the Great Lakes water that form a bi-national coalition to work with federal, state and provincial governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem, protection and restoration. Mayors representing 90 cities and municipalities are active participants in Great Lakes' issues relating to governance, economics and science.

To achieve this objective, the Mayors with interest in the Great Lakes have agreed to:

1. Establish a GLSLC Initiative, under which Mayors will work jointly to advance the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes ecosystem;
2. Seek partnerships and collaborate with other levels of government, various commissions and panels, and other organizations involved in Great Lakes issues;
3. Implement and advance existing mayoral initiatives concerning the Great Lakes;
4. Call upon the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament to appropriate funds for the development, by an independent panel of science and policy experts which include the member Mayors and deliver a detailed plan for the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. This Plan will be updated as various issues arise and will serve as a blueprint to guide agreed-upon future legislative and appropriations activities that restore and protect the Great Lakes ecosystem;
5. Identify, evaluate, highlight and share information with each other about successful local initiatives that protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem while encouraging the vitality of Great Lakes communities;
6. Continue to meet, communicate and share ideas about the various issues the member cities are experiencing in order to advance the much needed knowledge, understanding and solutions of said issues, with the goal of creating as expeditiously as possible, comprehensive solutions.

Mayor Darrin Canniff and Councillor Clare Latimer represent Chatham-Kent on the GLSLC initiative.

## **Comments**

### **Stimulus Water Restoration Initiative – Call to Action for Municipal Leaders**

The GLSLC initiative is calling on its members to urge their federal representatives to provide support for critical water and infrastructure restoration priorities in upcoming

economic stimulus legislation. The key message is that our federal governments must make every effort to accelerate the pace of recovery, and that the investments will put residents to work and generate economic activity while addressing urgent needs in our communities. Specifically, the GLSLC initiative is seeking investments that:

- Safeguard drinking water and modernize clean water infrastructure
- Help communities respond to coastal erosion and the impacts from extreme weather events

The GLSLC has prepared background information and sample materials for mayors and other municipal leaders to use in this campaign.

### **Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors**

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

**Consultation**

No consultations took place in the writing of this report.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendation.

Prepared by:

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Attachment(s): none

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