

**October 6, 2025**

**Continuing Collaboration to Develop the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Maritime System**

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River maritime system is designed as a continuous waterway extending more than 2,400 miles from Duluth, Minnesota to the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the Atlantic Ocean; and,

**WHEREAS**, this single, integrated system includes the Lakes, the River, and connecting channels, as well as built infrastructure including locks, navigational structures, recreational harbours, and commercial ports; and,

**WHEREAS**, this single, integrated system's operations are made possible by public investment in built infrastructure, and binational cooperation on maritime support operations, such as maintenance of aids to navigation and ice breaking, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime system includes more than 100 commercial ports, and moves more than 250 million short tons of cargo per year; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River maritime system is a major component of the regional economy, and generates over 350,000 U.S. and Canadian jobs related to the shipping industry, and U.S. \$50 billion in economic activity including commercial and recreational fisheries across the Great Lakes; and,

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the importance of this transportation system, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers launched a Maritime Initiative in 2013, created a *Strategy for the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Maritime Transportation System* (“MTS Strategy”) in 2016, and identified three major regional maritime goals of doubling maritime trade, reducing the environmental impact of the region's transportation network, and supporting the region's industrial core; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers Maritime Initiative has been working aggressively to implement the MTS Strategy through efforts to improve State-Provincial coordination and enhance the use of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence maritime system; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence maritime system continues to be a significantly underutilized transportation asset, despite having capacity, which presents an opportunity to move more of the region's cargo by water; and,

**WHEREAS**, continued public investment in regional infrastructure such as the Soo Locks, individual port facilities, small harbours, and shipyards is a critical element of public sector support for strengthening of the regional maritime system; and,

**WHEREAS**, the North American and global shipping industry continues to rapidly evolve with the implementation of innovative new technologies and fuels and these technologies may be implemented to modernize the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River maritime system; and,

**WHEREAS**, communication, engagement, and collaboration between U.S. and Canadian regional stakeholders is essential to the successful development of trade, continued investment in the system, and implementation of new technologies and fuels;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Governors and Premiers affirm their shared commitment to the MTS Strategy goals of doubling maritime trade, reducing the environmental impact of the region's transportation network, and supporting the region's industrial core; and,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that to meet these MTS Strategy goals the Governors and Premiers Maritime Initiative's priorities for future work will include development of market opportunities for shippers to utilize the maritime system, continued advancement of regionally important infrastructure projects and policies that enable safe, reliable, and efficient shipping, and advancement of innovative technologies, fuels, and shipbuilding investments to modernize the regional maritime system and improve its competitiveness; and,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that in recognition of the multitude of regional maritime stakeholders, the Governors and Premiers Maritime Initiative will seek to strengthen maritime stakeholder engagement and communication with a particular emphasis on assisting State and Provincial partners in building their maritime coordination, investment, planning, and outreach capacity; and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Great Lakes St. Lawrence States and Provinces call on the Federal Governments, within their areas of competence, to continue supporting collaborative binational development of the system and adoption of policies that improve maritime transparency, efficiency, accountability, and regulatory harmony.

*Adopted by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers on this 6th day of October, 2025.*