October 13, 2023

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Trees Initiative

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region is home to more than 100 million people, a US$6 trillion regional economy, abundant natural resources including water, forests and agricultural lands and is uniquely positioned to be a center for investment in trees and other natural climate solutions; and

WHEREAS, tree planting creates a multitude of environmental benefits including storing and sequestering carbon, improving water quality, recharging groundwater, and providing habitat for wildlife; and,

WHEREAS, tree planting benefits quality of life and public health by providing recreation areas; improving local air quality; mitigating extreme heat and reducing energy use; creating other economic benefits and jobs; and can help address issues of equity and environmental justice; and,

WHEREAS, public, private and nongovernmental entities are working to make environmental improvements; and,

WHEREAS, demand for tree planting projects is expected to grow significantly in coming years as companies and others work to reduce carbon emissions and accomplish other goals; and,

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence States and Provinces have established tree planting goals and programs that recognize the importance and many benefits of planting trees; and,

WHEREAS, recent U.S. federal legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act provides important new funding and programs, including more than US$2 billion for urban and rural forestry, that is stimulating demand for tree planting; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers hereby create the "Great Lakes St. Lawrence Trees Initiative" with the goal of planting 250 million trees in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence States and Provinces by 2033, while working to identify and develop strategies and policies to maximize tree planting benefits for the environment, economy and people of the region. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Trees Initiative will work to create partnerships among corporations, nongovernmental organizations,

governments, universities and schools, civic organizations and other entities to achieve this regional goal.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Great Lakes St. Lawrence States and Provinces will collaborate and support one another and other entities to reach their individual and collective tree planting goals.

Adopted by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers on this 13th day of October, 2023.