

February 15, 2023

Hon. Chrystia Freeland Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Government of Canada
chrystia.freeland@fin.gc.ca

**Re: Securing Canada's 1 Billion Investment in a Strengthened
Freshwater Action Plan**

Dear Minister:

City Council, at its meeting held on February 13, 2023, considered the above-noted matter and passed Resolution No. R-230213-007 approving the following:

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-23-003 respecting Securing Canada's 1 Billion Investment in a Strengthened Freshwater Action Plan- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiatives, supports the resolutions attached."

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michelle Palmer, PMP, DASM, CSCMP, CPPB
Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness

cc: Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
MP Daniel Blaikie NDP Critic – Finance
MP Jasraj Singh Hallan Conservative Critic – Finance
MP Gerard Deltell Conservative Critic – Environment
MP Laurel Collins NDP Critic - Environment

Securing Canada's \$1 Billion Investment in a Strengthened Freshwater Action Plan

WHEREAS the City of Owen Sound, as a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, supports: protecting source water, planning for climate change impacts and shoreline resilience, ensuring safe and affordable water services for all our residents, and building up a sustainable blue economy in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

WHEREAS ensuring healthy communities and a strong economy for Canadians depend on securing Canada's source water, which includes addressing water quality issues, contaminants and pollution, supporting biodiversity and reversing wetland and fish and wildlife habitat loss and improving community knowledge to empower citizens to safeguard this essential resource.

WHEREAS a Freshwater Action Plan and the Great Lakes Protection Initiative it supported were first announced in the 2017 Canadian federal budget with a \$44.84 million investment over five years.

WHEREAS the Freshwater Action Plan has combined science and action to address priorities in the Great Lakes such as preventing toxic and nuisance algae, enhancing the resilience of coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes, restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern and supporting Canada's commitments under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, among other priorities.

WHEREAS a commitment was made by the Liberal Party of Canada in the 2021 federal election to strengthen the Freshwater Action Plan with an historic investment of \$1 billion over ten years to restore and protect large lakes and river systems starting with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

WHEREAS the federal government only committed \$19.6 million in funding in the 2022 Budget for the Freshwater Action Plan, falling short of the aforementioned commitment.

WHEREAS the United States has invested \$1.8 billion in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) since 2017 and will see accelerated funding with the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*.

WHEREAS a 2018 University of Michigan study shows that for every dollar of federal spending on GLRI projects between 2010 and 2016, yielded \$3.35 in additional economic activity.

WHEREAS nearly half of Canada's population lives in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, a region that will continue to see accelerated growth, resulting in greater land and resource use pressures that will further contribute to water availability and quality issues.

WHEREAS the [Stockholm Resilience Centre](#) recently identified the importance of wetlands as carbon sinks and fresh water's role in climate mitigation.

WHEREAS the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative outlined 30 recommendations to Environment and Climate Change Canada as part of a ten-year, \$2.2 billion [Action Plan 2020-2030 to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence](#) (Action Plan 2020-2030), addressing shoreline erosion, outdated infrastructure, invasive species, exposure to toxins and beach contamination, following an 18-month consultation with First Nations, NGOs, academics and other experts.

WHEREAS the recommendations outlined in Action Plan 2020-2030 should serve as the basis of programming for strengthened federal action in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin through its strengthened Freshwater Action Plan.

WHEREAS the newly established Canada Water Agency should play a role in accelerating the rollout of funding made available through a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan.

WHEREAS Freshwater Action Plan funding should largely be directed to community groups, local governments and First Nations to ensure that investments made will have the biggest local impact and empower action at the local level, rather than being held back for federal administration and operations.

WHEREAS it is critical to implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including accelerating a \$1 billion over five years, and to creating a Canada Water Agency to consolidate and coordinate federal water efforts and support provinces and territories in addressing systemic issues impacting the viability

of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and the communities dependent upon the region's source water.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Owen Sound calls on the federal government to commit \$1 billion in funding over five years for a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan in Budget 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Owen Sound calls on the federal government to guide its Freshwater Action Plan funding to implement recommendations in the Action Plan 2020-2030.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Owen Sound calls on the federal government to direct priority funding under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan to projects in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Owen Sound calls on the federal government to make municipalities eligible for future funding in programs announced under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City of Owen Sound directs its staff to submit this resolution to the federal Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Finance; the Minister of Environment and Climate Change; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (responsible for the Canada Water Agency), and local Member of Parliament.