



Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission



**A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CANADA
WATER AGENCY**

WHEREAS, water governance in Canada is complex and multi-jurisdictional, currently involving more than twenty federal departments and agencies, as well as the provinces, territories, municipal governments, and Indigenous governments and Treaty Rights;

WHEREAS, the federal government has direct responsibilities related to fisheries, fish habitat, navigation, federal lands, Indigenous affairs, and international relations including the management of transboundary waters, and also has significant responsibilities for agriculture, biodiversity, health, and the environment, and it serves a significant role in supporting aquatic research and technology and ensuring national policies and standards are in place on water, habitat, and health-related issues;

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes flow across multiple political boundaries including those separating Canada and the United States;

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Prime Minister of Canada directed his ministers to, “create a new Canada Water Agency to work together with the provinces, territories, Indigenous, Inuit and Métis peoples, local authorities, scientists and others to find the best ways to keep our water safe, clean and well-managed;

WHEREAS, a proposed objective of a Canada Water Agency is that “Federal policies promote effective management and protection of freshwater resources and ecosystems in Canada for 21st century challenges and beyond—including adapting to climate change”;

WHEREAS, Great Lakes fisheries are one of Canada’s most culturally and economically important freshwater resources that depend on the wise management of fish habitat including the management of water quality and quantity to support sustainable fisheries under a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes benefit from a well coordinated and collaborative binational environmental governance framework that includes the International Joint Commission, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, GLFC, government agencies at all levels, Indigenous groups, as well as non-government organizations that have

The opinions expressed here are those of the independent committee of advisors and not necessarily those of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from indigenous, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, environmental, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are appointed by the commission.

collectively contributed to the management of water, habitat, and fisheries issues for decades.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Canadian and U.S. Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission support the creation of a Canada Water Agency, and call upon the Government of Canada to ensure the mandate of the Agency is clearly and strongly aligned with fisheries and fish habitat protection and management, and that its creation, governance and activities be designed to complement and fill gaps in the existing multi-nation management and science governance institutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Canada Water Agency should focus on water quality and quantity as it relates to fish habitat, biodiversity conservation, and human use.

Passed unanimously

May 25, 2021

U.S. and Canadian Committee of Advisors