



Great Lakes-St. Lawrence  
Legislative Caucus

## 2020 Virtual Meetings of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

*September 11-October 9*

### Contaminants of Emerging Concern in the Great Lakes Basin

- WHEREAS,** the waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River provide a multitude of ecological, social, and economic benefits for approximately 40 million Canadian and U.S. residents; and
- WHEREAS,** the term “Contaminants of Emerging Concern” (CECs) refers to a wide variety of compounds that are present in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin<sup>1</sup> and that pose known or suspected risks to human health, the environment, and the economy, but are not widely regulated, such as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), perfluorooctanoic acids (PFOAs), pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and 1,4-Dioxane; and
- WHEREAS,** wastewater treatment plants in the U.S. and Canada discharge 4.8 billion gallons of treated effluent into the Great Lakes basin every day, and these wastewater treatment plants are only equipped to remove approximately half<sup>2</sup> of the chemicals that have been identified in sewage; and
- WHEREAS,** some CECs, including PBDEs and PFOAs, are considered Chemicals of Mutual Concern (CMCs) under Annex 3 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) while others, such as microplastics and 1,4-Dioxane, are not part of that effort; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC) recognizes that advancing the understanding of the harmful impacts of CECs and taking precautionary steps to impede their further introduction and spread via all known pathways is critical to protecting the economic and ecological well-being of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the GLLC requests government agencies as well as research institutions to: 1) assess whether existing plans, programs, and policies are adequate to understand the risks posed by CECs and protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin and its residents from those risks; and 2) recommend additional efforts that might be needed to address current and future CECs in the basin; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that this resolution be submitted to appropriate state, provincial, and federal officials.

*Adopted on October 9, 2020.*



MIDWEST

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<sup>1</sup>2011. Uslu, Merih Otker, and Nihar Biswas (University of Windsor Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering) and Saad Jasim (International Joint Commission). *Chemicals of Emerging Concern in the Great Lakes Region*. Retrieved from: <http://caid.ca/CheGreLak2011.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>2013. International Joint Commission. *More on IJC's Great Lakes Wastewater Treatment Study Removing Chemicals of Emerging Concern*. Retrieved from: [http://www.ijc.org/en\\_/blog/2013/12/11/more\\_on\\_IJC\\_great\\_lakes\\_wastewater\\_treatment\\_study\\_cecs/](http://www.ijc.org/en_/blog/2013/12/11/more_on_IJC_great_lakes_wastewater_treatment_study_cecs/).