

STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF KOOCHICHING)
CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS)

CERTIFICATE OF ADMINISTRATOR



I, the undersigned, Administration Support Specialist of International Falls, Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the attached copy and certify that it is an exact duplicate of: **Resolution No. 48-2021**, duly adopted July 6, 2021 by the City Council of the City of International Falls, Minnesota.

WITNESS my hand this 7th day of July, 2021.



Emma Rud, Administration Support Specialist

CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA
RESOLUTION No. 48-2021

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION IN THE
SALE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE**

Resolution offered by Councilor: Krause
Resolution supported by Councilor: Holden

WHEREAS, the Town of Fort Frances is known as the “Sister City” to the City of International Falls, sharing an International border; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Frances—International Falls International Bridge ["International Bridge"] is a critical economic and community link connecting the City of International Falls, Minnesota and Town of Fort Frances, Ontario; and

WHEREAS, the International Bridge sees more than 800,000 vehicle crossing annually, including: tourists destined throughout Minnesota and Northwestern Ontario, local trips for employment, business, recreational, educational, medical, emergency response, and family reasons, commercial traffic serving the resource-based economy west of Thunder Bay, and the importing of goods used in the mining, agricultural, and forestry sectors; and

WHEREAS, the International Bridge has been privately owned by the operators of local paper mills since it was built in 1908, and is currently owned, through subsidiaries, by the Packaging Corporation of America and Resolute Forest Products ["Resolute"], which is required by the Customs Act to provide the Canada Border Services Agency with facilities on the Canadian side of the International Bridge; and

WHEREAS, in Ontario, tolls on international bridges are authorized by the provincial Minister of Transportation under the Toll Bridges Act, but the bridge owners have placed their toll collection on the Minnesota side; and

WHEREAS, these tolls have become a growing concern for the citizens of International Falls, Fort Frances, and the surrounding communities, and deter Canadian locals and visitors from crossing into the United States to support local businesses; and

WHEREAS, the only other privately-owned toll bridge connecting the United States and Canada is the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor, which is 7,500 feet in length and charges less per crossing; and

WHEREAS, a January 31, 2006 public meeting revealed that one span of the International Bridge had only 15 to 20 years left in its lifespan before it needed to be replaced, at a then-estimated cost of \$8 million (USD); and

WHEREAS, since 2006, it has been understood that high tolls were being charged by the bridge owners in order to rehabilitate the bridge in the 2020s, but Resolute now indicates that it wishes to divest itself from ownership, after collecting these high tolls for many years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Fort Frances Council adopted resolutions in 2005 and 2006 calling on the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to acquire the International Bridge and make it a public asset without tolls, but those calls went unanswered; and

WHEREAS, the City of International Falls and its neighboring communities are concerned that new private ownership of the International Bridge will result in even higher tolls or that public access to the bridge will be compromised for safety or financial reasons; and

WHEREAS, Ontario's Toll Bridges Act permits the Government of Ontario to enter into agreements with any Canadian or foreign authority for "the joint financing, construction or operation of any international bridge or tunnel and for any matter incidental thereto", as reflected in the provincial and state governments' \$30 million investment to replace the Rainy River Baudette Bridge, which continues to operate without tolls; and

WHEREAS, access to the International Bridge facilitates treaty obligations, including under the Jay Treaty of 1794, which allows Indigenous people from Canada to live and work freely in the United States, and allows access to traditional territories in northern Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the City of International Falls' 2019 Comprehensive Plan recognized the opportunity for Federal, State, Provincial, and Local governments to work together to reconsider relocation of the International Bridge to plan for a publically-owned International Bridge that would provide for a safer, more attractive, and toll-free International Boundary crossing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of International Falls, Minnesota urges through this Resolution to its lawmakers to immediately intervene in the sale of the International Bridge and make all necessary efforts to acquire the International Bridge with their Canadian counterparts, operate it as a public asset, and remove tolls, and to meet with Council and administration of the municipality to brief it on their efforts and plans to protect this vital economic and community link; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Administrator is directed to forward this resolution in support of Governmental Intervention in the Sale of the International Bridge to Representative Pete Stauber, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Tina Smith, Governor Tim Walz, Representative Rob Ecklund, Senator Tom Bakk, Koochiching County, Packaging Corporation of America, and the Town of Fort Frances.

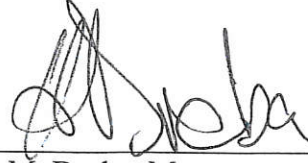
Yeas: Councilors Ditsch, Holden, Krause, and Mayor Droba

Nays: none

Abstained: none

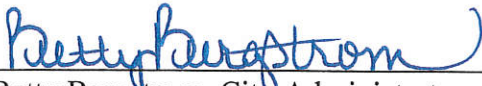
Absent: Councilor Buller

Approved and adopted on the 6th day of July, 2021.



Harley M. Droba, Mayor

Attest:



Betty Bergstrom, City Administrator