

Ballast Water Management Needs in Response to the International Maritime Organization Convention

Whereas, a global approach to minimize and ultimately eliminate the transfer of harmful aquatic invasive species (AIS) and pathogens across the seas and oceans of the world is needed; and

Whereas, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations agency responsible for maritime issues, has adopted a new convention to establish global provisions to control and manage ships' ballast water to prevent AIS transport; and

Whereas, in February 2004 the IMO came to agreement on the following:

- All ships will be required to implement a Ballast Water and Sediments Management Plan;
- All ships have to carry a Ballast Water Record Book and will be required to implement ballast water management procedures to a given standard;
- All ships will be required to install a treatment system by specific years (as early as 2009 and as late as 2016, depending on the size of the ship);
- Signatory nations are authorized to adopt more stringent regulation of ballast water;
- The treaty will take effect after it is ratified by 30 nations, representing 35 percent of the world's gross tonnage; and

Whereas, the importance of ballast water issues associated with international shipping is addressed in the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act (NAISA) presently before Congress; and

Whereas, while the IMO convention reflects significant progress on AIS prevention and control on a global scale, its standards, timeframes and enforcement protocols are not as aggressive as those proposed in NAISA.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission applauds the IMO for its initial step in addressing AIS issues and, in so doing, urges the IMO to move forward aggressively to develop and implement additional actions that will complement and expedite domestic policy; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission agrees to work with other interested parties in the region to assess how IMO agreement provisions will affect future domestic policy on ballast water in terms of protection from AIS in U.S. waters with particular attention to the Great Lakes; and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission urges the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to use the momentum from the IMO agreement to expedite efforts to develop and implement much needed standards, regulations and guidelines.

Unanimously adopted by the Great Lakes Commission at its 2004 Semiannual Meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, May 4, 2004.