

Resolution

Support for the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2005

Whereas, aquatic invasive species continue to be a major threat to the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River ecosystem and the binational economies it supports; and

Whereas, there has been no federal legislation addressing the need for more effective prevention and control of aquatic invasive species since passage of the National Invasive Species Act in 1996, allowing continued potential for introduction of such species in the waters of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence system; and

Whereas, despite repeated calls for federally established ballast water discharge standards, the U.S. still has no such standards or ballast water treatment requirements, other than mid-ocean ballast exchange for vessels declaring ballast on board, and

Whereas, there is no federal legislation providing a comprehensive prevention and control program to address other known pathways of aquatic invasive species; and

Whereas, the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2005 (NAISA) proposes specific near term actions to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into U.S. waters by vessels, including use of best ballast water management practices, ballast water treatment requirements based on discharge standards, installation of the best performing treatment technology available, certified ballast water exchange, and education and technical assistance programs; and

Whereas, NAISA further proposes, on a comprehensive level, actions to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species by other pathways including a priority pathway management program and screening processes for importation of live aquatic organisms; and

Whereas, NAISA would establish a national network for the early detection and monitoring of new aquatic invasive species, and a rapid response fund to help states take immediate control and eradication measures; and

Whereas, NAISA would specifically support upgrade and operation of the Chicago River Ship and Sanitary Canal Dispersal Barrier at full federal expense;

Whereas, NAISA proposes a multi-agency marine and freshwater research program, including ecological and pathway surveys and research to assess rates, patterns and conditions of introductions of aquatic invasive species; and

Whereas, sound research is essential to development of informed policy; and

Whereas, NAISA provides continued support for regional aquatic nuisance species (ANS) panels, including the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species for which the Great Lakes Commission provides staff support;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission supports passage of the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2005 (S.770, H.R.1591, H.R.1592) as a necessary and overdue federal initiative to protect U.S. aquatic ecosystems, including the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River ecosystem, from further damage; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission recognizes that the success of aquatic invasive species prevention and control efforts requires a strong state-federal partnership as well as interstate cooperation; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the Commission supports comprehensive legislation whereby state action is allowed to improve on federal protections related to shipping practices in efforts to protect state waters from aquatic invasions; and

Be it Finally Resolved, that the Commission urges greater cooperation with the federal Government of Canada and the provinces to make progress toward the objective of preventing and managing the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River ecosystem, recognizing the limited effectiveness of a purely unilateral policy in shared waters.

Adopted by the Great Lakes Commission at its Annual Meeting, Sept. 29, 2005, in Ann Arbor, Mich.