



Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

Eisenhower Corporate Park ■ 2805 South Industrial Hwy., Suite 100
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-6791
Office (734) 971-9135 ■ Fax (734) 971-9150 ■ glc@glc.org

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July 17, 2007

The Honorable James Oberstar, Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2365 RHOB
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings,
Chairman
Coast Guard and Maritime
Transportation Subcommittee
2235 RHOB
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable John Mica, Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2313 RHOB
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Steve LaTourette,
Ranking Member
Coast Guard and Maritime
Transportation Subcommittee
2371 RHOB
Washington DC 20515

Re: HR 2830, Title V – Ballast Water Treatment

Dear Congressmen Oberstar, Mica, Cummings and LaTourette:

Thank you for your leadership in bringing legislation to the floor of the House of Representatives to address the serious problem of ship-mediated introductions of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into the Great Lakes and other waters of our nation. On behalf of the Great Lakes states, we sincerely appreciate your assistance in stemming the tide of AIS from ballast water discharges – the pathway by which most AIS enter the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes states have repeatedly urged Congress to make passage of legislation to address invasive species a top priority and we have provided a consistent suite of recommendations expressing our views on elements of an effective ballast water management program. The Great Lakes Commission recently adopted a resolution (attached) outlining recommendations that reflect a consensus of the Great Lakes states, and these recommendations are consistent with positions expressed by the Council of Great Lakes Governors (attached). The states desire comprehensive federal legislation that would curtail introductions of AIS from all pathways, but if enactment of such legislation is not possible in the near term, we favor acting now to address ballast water discharges.

We have reviewed HR 2830, legislation that was reported out by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in late June, to determine its consistency with the positions of the Great Lakes states. We are pleased that this bill addresses some of the specific recommendations that have been articulated by the states. For example, it expresses an ultimate goal of zero discharge of AIS. We are also encouraged by other provisions such as the inclusion of a federal discharge standard that is 100 times more stringent than the discharge standard of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). This standard should, when implemented, provide a significantly improved level of protection for our environment and economy.

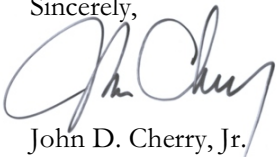
However, there are a number of other provisions of the legislation that are contrary to the positions expressed by the Great Lakes states. **We are concerned that, if enacted in its current form, HR 2830 would fall short of providing the protection needed for our economy and the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem.** For example, HR 2830 in its current form would:

- Impose an unnecessarily long timeline for when ships entering the Great Lakes would be required to meet the environmentally-protective standard. Ships would have as long as December 31, 2015 and possibly longer to install technology to meet the standard. It is our belief that action must be taken as soon as possible and, in any event, ships should be required to meet the environmentally protective standard within 5 years.
- Preempt the states' ability to protect their economic and environmental interests. We support a uniform federal discharge standard. However, states should not be precluded from enacting measures that could complement and strengthen the federal program.

These are critical issues for the Great Lakes states that we urge be addressed prior to adoption of HR 2830 by the House of Representatives. At present, scientists tell us that a new species enters the Great Lakes every eight months. We can't afford to wait until 2015 or longer to protect our region's economy and the health of the world's largest body of surface fresh water. Moreover, it is not acceptable to preclude states from protecting our environment and our citizens.

Again, thank you for your leadership and support. We hope that we can work with you to address our concerns with the current version of HR 2830 so that it can earn the support of the Great Lakes Commission. For additional information, please contact Tim Eder, Executive Director at 734-971-9135 or (teder@glc.org).

Sincerely,



John D. Cherry, Jr.
Chairman

Cc: Great Lakes States Congressional Delegations