



RESOLUTION
Adopted September 29, 2015

**Support for prohibiting the import of
harmful aquatic invasive species**

Whereas, the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region are threatened by the ongoing introduction and spread of harmful aquatic invasive species; and

Whereas, invasive species, once they become established, are usually impossible to eradicate and costly to control, as demonstrated by the more than \$75 million in federal funding spent annually in the U.S. to control only two invasive species: Asian carp and sea lamprey; and

Whereas, prevention is the most cost-effective method of protecting against the harmful impacts of invasive species and the Great Lakes Commission has consistently advocated for strengthened federal laws and programs to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species through multiple pathways, including ballast water, canals and waterways, and the trade in live organisms; and

Whereas, the U.S. and Canada are leading import markets in the global trade of live organisms, with more than 2,200 species of non-native wildlife being imported into the U.S. over the last decade, including more than 300 species that pose risks as potential invaders; and

Whereas, the existing federal regulatory system in the U.S. for preventing the importation and trade of injurious wildlife is the Lacey Act (18 USC 42) as administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); and

Whereas, the Government of Canada recently announced new regulations to prohibit the import, possession, transport and release of high-risk species; and

Whereas, existing procedures too often result in prohibiting species only *after* they have been imported and begin spreading in the wild, as occurred with Asian carp, Northern snakehead and the Burmese python, which are disrupting ecosystems where they are established and costing millions of dollars annually to control; and

Whereas, the FWS, through a science-based screening process, has proactively identified 11 non-native species with both a high invasive potential and a high climate match for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region and is now planning to list those species as injurious under the Lacey Act in order to prohibit their importation; and

Whereas, the Council of Great Lakes Governors included four of these species in its list of “least wanted” species that pose the greatest threat to the basin and require preventative action; and

Whereas, in other countries these species are known to compete with native fish for food, prey on native larvae and juvenile fish, carry infectious diseases, alter habitats, contribute to algal blooms, and disrupt local economies.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission supports the listing of additional species as “injurious” under Title 18 of the Lacey Act to proactively prevent their introduction and potential harm to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region, including 11 to be proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- Fishes: Amur Sleeper (*Percottus glenii*), Crucian Carp (*Carassius carassius*), Eurasian Minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*), European Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*), Nile Perch (*Lates niloticus*), Prussian Carp (*Carassius gibelio*), Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*), Stone Moroko (*Pseudorasbora parva*), Zander (*Sander lucioperca*) and Wels Catfish (*Silurus glanis*)
- Crayfish: Yabby (*Cherax destructor*);

Be it further resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency to use their authorities to also prohibit the importation of these 11 high-risk species; and

Be it further resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission urges federal agencies in the U.S. and Canada to continue using existing authorities to expedite the identification and restrict the importation of non-native species that pose a high risk of being harmful to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region ecosystem and economy; and

Be it finally resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission recognizes that preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species through all pathways is critical to protecting the economic and ecological well-being of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region.