
A Great Lakes Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species

Preamble

INTRODUCTION

Nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species pose a growing threat to the economy and ecosystem of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region. Species such as the zebra mussel, ruffe, round goby, sea lamprey, Eurasian watermilfoil and purple loosestrife, among many others, are an insidious form of biological pollution. They prey upon and displace native animals and plants, reduce biodiversity, limit water use activities and damage public and private infrastructure. Preventing new infestations and limiting the spread of existing ones is critical to protecting and enhancing ecological integrity and economic viability.

A growing framework of laws, agreements and programs has been established to address the threat posed by nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species. Great Lakes-St. Lawrence jurisdictions, however, will benefit from a regional policy agreement, or 'Action Plan,' that articulates a clear vision to guide collective interjurisdictional action, and presents a series of principles, goals and objectives to attain that vision. Such an Action Plan will establish a framework for prevention and control efforts within Great Lakes-St. Lawrence jurisdictions.

ACTION PLAN FORMAT AND OBJECTIVES

The Action Plan presents a vision statement, goals and principles drawn from existing laws, policies and programs, to guide nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species prevention and control efforts. The Action Plan Addendum includes objectives to assist further in developing and evaluating jurisdiction-specific and collective actions. The overall purpose of the Action Plan is to:

- ? design and implement timely and effective prevention and control measures;
- ? strengthen interjurisdictional consultation and decision making at senior levels;
- ? provide effective mechanisms for timely and aggressive responses to documented infestations; and
- ? enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of current efforts.

The Action Plan is a good-faith agreement among its signatories. It is not legally binding and does not amend or replace existing laws, agreements and policies. Rather, it builds upon and showcases these initiatives in the interest of maximizing their effectiveness and strengthening the collective regional effort.

The Action Plan outlines a challenging and ambitious framework for prevention and control. Implementation will emphasize continuous progress toward a shared vision and set of goals, with a series of principles to guide these efforts.

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Action Plan builds upon a long-standing tradition of binational partnership, within and outside of government, in promoting the informed use and protection of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence resources. The Action Plan is an initiative of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, chartered by the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force under provisions of the U.S. federal Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-646). With U.S. and Canadian representation from governments, tribal authorities, business and industry, academia and environmental/conservation groups, the Panel is charged with establishing priorities and coordinating a regional response to problems associated with nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species.

Panel members reviewed a wide array of laws, policies, programs and agreements—in Great Lakes-St. Lawrence jurisdictions and beyond—to elicit commonly held principles, goals and objectives relevant to nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species prevention and control. The Action Plan was drafted through a collaborative process involving Panel members and other interested parties. The Great Lakes Commission, a binational, state/provincial agency that provides technical support to the Great Lakes Panel, coordinated the drafting process and supports Action Plan distribution, use and updating.

ACTION PLAN SIGNATORIES

The Great Lakes governors and premiers are signatory to the Action Plan, which includes a vision statement, goals and principles. Great Lakes Panel members are signatory to an Action Plan Addendum, which provides further detail to support Plan implementation. Signatories agree to use the Action Plan and Addendum as guidance in developing their state and provincial plans and priorities; as a means of enhancing communication and cooperation with others; and as guidance for assessing progress in pursuing the stated vision and goals. Signatories accept the overall intent of the Action Plan and agree to pursue its principles, goals and objectives consistent with their individual mandates and priorities, and within available resources.

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Vision

We, the Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes States and Provinces, envision healthy aquatic ecosystems where new introductions of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species are prevented, and adverse ecological and economic impacts of species already present are minimized.

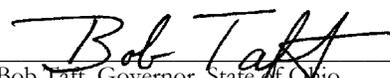
Goals and Principles

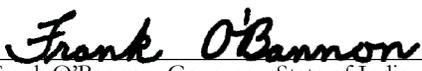
We recognize the threat posed by nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species and acknowledge our responsibility, both independently and collectively, to act promptly and decisively to attain three goals: 1) prevent the unauthorized introduction of nonindigenous aquatic species; 2) limit the spread of established aquatic nuisance species within the region; and 3) minimize the harmful ecological, economic, social and public health impacts resulting from aquatic nuisance species already present.

Individually and collectively, we agree to use the following principles as guidance in addressing these goals:

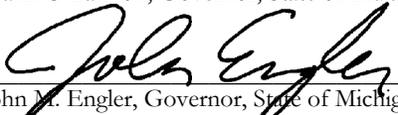
- ? Responsibility for prevention and control efforts is shared by all who manage, use or otherwise benefit from our water resources and related aquatic life.
- ? Recognizing the interconnections between hydrologic basins in North America, jurisdictions within and outside the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region share an individual and collective responsibility to prevent the spread of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species.
- ? Preventing the unauthorized introduction of nonindigenous aquatic species is the fundamental aim of our collective management effort.
- ? Measures to control the spread of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species should not cause as much or more environmental or economic harm than the species does itself.
- ? Sound prevention and control decision making incorporates comprehensive, multidisciplinary research.
- ? A coordinated and responsive management structure, functioning on a binational, multijurisdictional basis, is needed for effective prevention and control.
- ? Interjurisdictional cooperation, coordination and advocacy, based on a spirit of consensus, is needed for effective prevention and control.
- ? Partnerships and collaborative initiatives among all who use, manage or benefit from our water resources and related aquatic life are an important component of the collective management effort.
- ? An informed public is a fundamental component of our collective management effort for preventing the introduction and spread of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species.
- ? All who use, manage or benefit from our water resources and related aquatic life shall be afforded the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the development and implementation of prevention and control programs.


George H. Ryan, Governor, State of Illinois

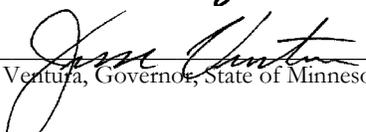

Bob Taft, Governor, State of Ohio

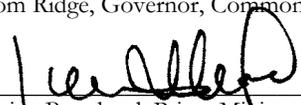

Frank O'Bannon, Governor, State of Indiana


Mike Harris, Premier, Province of Ontario


John M. Engler, Governor, State of Michigan


Tom Ridge, Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania


Jesse Ventura, Governor, State of Minnesota


Lucien Bouchard, Prime Minister, Province of Québec


George E. Pataki, Governor, State of New York


Tommy G. Thompson, Governor, State of Wisconsin