



RESOLUTION
Adopted July 27, 2016

Support for reauthorization of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act

Whereas, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River are the foundation of our region's outdoor recreation economy, with more than 4 million recreational boats registered in the eight Great Lakes states generating nearly \$16 billion in spending annually, and more than 12 million anglers and hunters spending \$24 billion annually; and

Whereas, restoring, enhancing and caring for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River is a longstanding and bipartisan priority for federal, state, provincial and local leaders in the region, including actions to support healthy fish and wildlife populations to maintain ecological diversity and strengthen economic benefits from fishing, hunting and wildlife watching; and

Whereas, since 1990 the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (GLFWRA) has supported local and regional fish and wildlife restoration, conservation and management projects, in addition to supporting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USF&WS) fish and wildlife conservation offices in the Great Lakes region; and

Whereas, through 2015 the GLFWRA has supported 149 projects with \$23 million in federal funding matched by \$11 million from more than 115 nonfederal partner organizations, that restored and protected fish and wildlife habitat and populations, minimized impacts from contaminants, halted illegal activities harming fish and wildlife, restored threatened and endangers species, and conserved migratory birds; and

Whereas, bipartisan legislation, S. 2949, has been introduced by leaders of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force that reauthorizes the GLFWRA and has been endorsed by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Ducks Unlimited, and the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition; and

Whereas, fish and wildlife agency experts from the Great Lakes states participate on a proposal review committee that assesses the effectiveness and appropriateness of proposed projects and makes recommendations to the USF&WS director for funding and implementation; and

Whereas, the GLFWRA is a key program through which the USF&WS carries out projects to meet the goals of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; and

Whereas, the GLFWRA is in need of reauthorization and regional organizations have collaborated with the USF&WS to recommend improvements to maintain and strengthen the program; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission has previously supported appropriations for and reauthorization of the program.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission supports legislation that reauthorizes and maintains the GLFWRA as a mechanism through which the federal government, the Great Lakes states, and other stakeholders can continue to implement cooperative conservation, restoration and management actions for fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes Basin, including actions to achieve the goals of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the Commission calls on the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation to support passage of legislation reauthorizing the GLFWRA that incorporates recommendations for improving the program from the USF&WS, the states and regional organizations involved in fish and wildlife restoration and conservation.

Adopted in a special meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, July 27, 2016, held via conference call.