

Great Lakes Panel
ANS
on Aquatic Nuisance Species

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Chair: John Navarro, Ohio Department
of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife
Vice Chair: Robert Wakeman, Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources

Co-Chairs, ANS Task Force
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: FAC
Falls Church, VA 22041

October 31, 2014

Dear ANS Task Force Co-Chairs:

I am writing to reiterate the significant challenges faced by the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) as well as the other Regional ANS Panels (panels) as a result of ongoing funding constraints. These constraints make it increasingly difficult for the panels to fully address ongoing ANS priorities as mandated under federal law (P.L. 101-646). There is considerable concern that these priorities and tasks cannot be adequately addressed due to significant funding limitations. The Great Lakes Panel and other panels have consistently identified and communicated this issue to the ANS Task Force (ANSTF).

Current funding levels are at a critical juncture. Basic operations of the panels are threatened by the recent decrease in funding levels from \$50,000 to \$40,000 annually per panel for the last two years. Funding limitations impact the panels' ability to convene regular meetings and conduct committee work, both of which underwrite the accomplishments of the ANSTF. In addition, these funding cuts are placing an increased financial burden on organizations such as the Great Lakes Commission which provide administrative and other essential support to the panels. Reduced funding to the regional panels is threatening to undermine 20+ years of investment in ANS prevention and control and deteriorate a strong collaborative fabric into a less effective patchwork.

I recognize that funding challenges for ANS programs are formally acknowledged in the ANS Task Force Strategic Plan. Namely, Goal 8, Objective 8.1 of the plan is to "Secure dedicated, long-term funding for the ANSTF Strategic Plan actions." We appreciate the ANSTF willingness to have continued dialogue on this issue and include it as an agenda item at several recent ANSTF meetings. While funding issues have been discussed at recent ANSTF meetings, we believe further action and immediate restoration of \$10,000 to each of the regional panels is essential.

The level of resources invested in ANS prevention and control will determine the extent to which our collective mission can be achieved through the work of the regional panels. If funding is not restored soon, not only will expanded programs be unachievable, but existing programs will become unsustainable. I look forward to working with you to take action on these funding challenges to effectively meet our ANS goals and objectives.

Sincerely,



John Navarro
Great Lakes Panel Chair