



## RESOLUTION

Adopted March 15, 2017

# Ballast Water Management in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System

- Whereas**, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River maritime transportation system has been and continues to be vital to the national economy of the United States and Canada by facilitating domestic and international trade through the movement of goods and commodities and supporting industries such as manufacturing, steel production, agribusiness and power generation; and
- Whereas**, ballast water discharge from vessels as a pathway for the introduction and movement of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the freshwaters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River remains an important concern for the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River; and
- Whereas**, implementation of policies and best management practices by the private sector and governments in the United States and Canada, including the successful implementation of ballast water exchange and salt water flushing practices for vessels entering the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, have significantly reduced species introduction and spread through ballast water discharge with no newly established non-native species resulting from ballast water discharges identified since 2006; and
- Whereas**, the eight states and two provinces along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River recognize that binational compatibility of federal ballast water treatment standards is needed to effectively manage a multijurisdictional shipping channel and encourage long-term private investment into the maritime transportation system; and
- Whereas**, AIS in the Great Lakes impact such critical sectors of the regional economy as electric power generation, public water supply, manufacturing, commercial and sport fishing, recreational boating and tourism; and
- Whereas**, the federal government of Canada is a signatory to and is developing regulations to implement the International Maritime Organization (IMO) *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments* that is scheduled to enter in to force on September 8, 2017; and
- Whereas**, the U.S. Coast Guard rule finalized in 2012 uses the IMO ballast water discharge standard as the basis of its regulatory regime and requires ocean-going ships to meet the discharge standard with an approved ballast water management system (BWMS); and
- Whereas**, the U.S. Coast Guard rule eliminates the requirement for ocean-going vessels to continue the current practice of conducting ballast water exchange or saltwater flushing prior to entering the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system once an approved BWMS is being used; and
- Whereas**, vendors of treatment technology for ocean-going ships are working to develop commercially available products that comply with the IMO, U.S. Coast Guard, and EPA rules and standards and the U.S. Coast Guard provided its first type approval to a treatment system in December 2016; and
- Whereas**, vessel operators, including those that traverse the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system, are required by the U.S. Coast Guard to implement best management practices, and are moving ahead of the type approval process and installing ballast water treatment systems at significant expense; and

**Whereas**, there are inherent differences between ocean-going vessels and lake freighters (“lakers”) operating on the Great Lakes in terms of their roles in the introduction and dispersal, respectively, of AIS, as well as in terms of ballast tank configurations and ballasting operations; and

**Whereas**, the relatively small size of the laker fleet, and unique ballasting configurations, vessel designs, and operations of the fleet hinder commercial development of cost-effective ballast management technology development for lakers; and

**Whereas**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2013 Vessel General Permit (VGP) requires ocean-going vessels and lakers built after December 1, 2009 to meet a discharge standard equivalent to the U.S. Coast Guard rule; maintains the requirement for ballast water exchange or saltwater flushing for ships entering the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system; and provides for Section 401 Water Quality Certifications from individual states; and

**Whereas**, Great Lakes states have responsibility and authority, pursuant to state law and the Clean Water Act, to protect their waters and water dependent resources through programs to manage ballast water to ensure compliance with state water quality standards; and

**Whereas**, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation’s ballast water control and management regulations require all vessels entering waters under Canadian or United States jurisdiction to manage ballast water for the prevention of AIS and requires vessels declaring “no ballast on board” to conduct saltwater flushing.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Great Lake Commission urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to pursue compatible federal ballast water treatment standards and enforcement mechanisms; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission supports strong federal ballast water regulations that sufficiently protect the unique economic and ecological interests of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence states and provinces; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission urges the U.S. Congress and federal agencies to work closely and consult with the Great Lakes states, and offers its assistance to advance ballast water policies and standards that protect the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin from further introduction and spread of AIS while minimizing financial impacts to vessel operators; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission supports maintaining requirements for ballast water exchange and saltwater flushing in addition to using treatment technology for ships entering the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system as additional protection against invasive species transfer from ballast water; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission encourages governments and the private sector to continue development of effective and feasible ballast water technology solutions for ocean-going ships and lakers to protect the ecological integrity of the unique freshwater conditions of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission encourages governments and the private sector to financially support cost-effective ballast management technology development for lakers; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission supports review of federal discharge standards, requirements and available technology at least every five years to ensure technology and standards are reflective of advances in scientific understanding and technology development; and

**Be It Finally Resolved**, that the Great Lakes Commission supports scientifically-based efforts to better understand and monitor the effectiveness of treatment technology and regulatory policies designed to reduce the risk of AIS transfer from ballast water.

*Adopted at the 2017 Semiannual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, March 14-16, 2017 in Washington, D.C.  
The resolution was passed unanimously.*