

Adopted Sept. 11, 2012

Resolution: Support for Continued Funding for the Great Ships Initiative

Whereas, the Great Ships Initiative (GSI) is an innovative collaboration to end the problem of ship-mediated invasive species in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system through independent research and demonstration of environmental technology, and consistent basinwide harbor monitoring; and

Whereas, the GSI has active involvement and support of a range of interest groups, including industry, the environmental community and all levels of government including cities, state governors and federal agencies; and

Whereas, the near-term goal of the GSI is to accelerate research, development and implementation of effective ballast treatment systems for ships that visit the Great Lakes from overseas and thus has established research capabilities at three scales – bench, land-based and shipboard – to address specific evaluation objectives consistent with International Maritime Organization (IMO) and state and federal requirements; and

Whereas, funders of GSI include U.S. and Canadian ports in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system; several Great Lakes states and the Great Lakes Protection Fund; U.S. federal agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration and both U.S. and Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway agencies; with in-kind support from the City of Superior, Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute and cargo carriers in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system; and with Advisory Committee participation by the Great Lakes Commission and the governors of Minnesota, New York and Wisconsin; and

Whereas, GSI has earned international attention for its work in ballast treatment technology, particularly that which is applicable to and effective in freshwater environments, and is critical to efforts to eliminate ships' ballast water as an AIS vector in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, the Great Lakes Commission acknowledges and endorses the important role of the GSI in advancing earlier adoption of effective technologies to protect the freshwater of the Great Lakes from ballast-water mediated releases of AIS; and

Be It Finally Resolved, the Great Lakes Commission calls for ongoing federal support of these efforts by maintaining funding for the GSI in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at an amount at least equal to previous funding cycles.