



June 5, 2007

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As members of the Healing Our Waters®-Great Lakes Coalition, we urge Congress to pass comprehensive invasive species legislation this year.

The Healing Our Waters Coalition is a group of 90 national, regional, and local organizations working to restore and protect the Great Lakes. The Coalition represents millions of Americans that live near, work near and love this national treasure.

Aquatic invasive species are one of the biggest threats facing the Great Lakes and their tributaries today. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration said in its 2005 report that the world's greatest freshwater lakes are "succumbing to an irreversible 'invasional meltdown' that may be more severe than chemical pollution." Invasive species cost the Great Lakes region an estimated \$5 billion every year. There are 185 invasive species already in the Great Lakes and another is discovered every 28 weeks.

Although the threat to the Great Lakes must be addressed, we believe doing so must be a part of a national solution. Zebra and quagga mussels first introduced into the Great Lakes from the ballast discharges of overseas ships are now found as far as Oklahoma and Nevada. Asian carp, which were first discovered in the lower Mississippi River, are now 40 miles from Lake Michigan.

The Great Lakes region and our nation need a comprehensive approach that prevents new invasive species from destroying our environment and economy. Any new law must end ships from dumping untreated ballast water into the Great Lakes. It must also empower and assist states in detecting species early and rapidly responding so they can be eradicated or controlled. Education and outreach are also critical to help people boating on the Great Lakes from unwittingly spreading invasive species from place to place. It is equally important that Congress not stop states from taking additional action to protect their waters and environment. Great Lakes states must retain the authority to enact their own commonsense solutions to protect this irreplaceable resource for future generations.

It is essential that this is the year Congress enacts a law that will protect the Great Lakes from another devastating blow. Manageable solutions to the problem of aquatic invasive species exist. Congress can support legislation such as the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2007, which was introduced by Senator Carl Levin. His bill lays a foundation in protecting aquatic ecosystems. It reduces invasive species introductions by requiring ballast water be treated before being discharged it into U.S. harbors. This bill prevents the inter-basin transfer of species like the Asian carp. It proposes a screening process to weed out harmful species before they are imported into the United States. It also includes important rapid response, early detection and education and outreach provisions. The Levin bill also sets out a comprehensive invasive species research agenda.

The Great Lakes represent 95 percent of our country's surface drinking water. The longer we wait, the more difficult and expensive it becomes to stop aquatic invasive species from destroying our Great Lakes economy, environment and way of life.

Again, we urge Congress to enact a comprehensive law or laws that will finally prevent new invasive species from getting in the Great Lakes, and across the nation, and help states control those that are here. Please do not hesitate to contact Chad Lord, policy director for the Coalition, at 202-454-3385 or clord@npca.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Sustainability

Alliance for the Great Lakes

Joel Brammeier, Associate Director for Policy

American P.I.E.

American Rivers

Andrew Fahlund, Vice President for Conservation

Audubon

April Gromnicki, Esq., Director, Ecosystem Restoration

Audubon New York

Sean Mahar, Associate Director of Conservation

Audubon Ohio

Jerome C. Tinianow, Executive Director

Biodiversity Project

Peter Alexander, Executive Director

Cattaraugus Creek Watershed Taskforce

Maria Maybee,

Chicago Zoological Society / Brookfield Zoo

Stuart D. Strahl, President and CEO

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director

Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota

Diana McKeown, Program Director

Clean Water Action of Michigan

David Holtz, Michigan Director

Clean Wisconsin

Melissa Malott, Water Program Director

Duluth Audubon Society

EAGLE - Environmental Association for Great Lakes Education

Nancy Nelson,

Environment Illinois

Max Muller, Environmental Advocate

Environment Michigan

Mike Shriberg, Director

Environmental Advocates of New York

Katherine Nadeau, Water and Natural Resources Program Associate

Erie County Environmental Coalition

Martin E. Visnosky, Chairperson

Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers
Cheryl Nenn, Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Georgian Bay Association
Mary Muter, Vice President

Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund
Jill Ryan, Executive Director

Great Lakes United
Jennifer Nalbome, Campaign Director

Huron River Watershed Council
Laura Rubin, Executive Director

Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Edward Michael, Chairman

Illinois Division - Izaak Walton League of America
Wendy Reid,

Indiana Division - Izaak Walton League of America
Charles Siar, President

Indiana Wildlife Federation
Janet Ryan, President

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Izaak Walton League of America
William Grant, Acting Executive Director

John G. Shedd Aquarium
Melanie Napoleon, Director - Great Lakes Conservation

Lake Erie Region Conservancy
Tom Fuhrman, Executive Director

Lake Michigan Interleague Organization
Jeanette Neagu and Judith Johnston, Co-President

League of Ohio Sportsmen
Larry Mitchell, President

League of Women Voters - Duluth
Anne Perry Moore, Elected Board Member

League of Women Voters of Michigan
Fran Hamburg, Vice President - Advocacy

League of Women Voters of Winnetka-Northfield-Kenilworth
Tane Beecham, Co-President

Mankato Area Environmentalists

Michigan Division - Izaak Walton League of America
John Trimmerger, President

Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Lisa Wozniak, Executive Director

Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Donna Stine, Acting Executive Director

Michigan Wildlife Conservancy
Dennis Fijalkowski, Executive Director

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Conservation Federation

Minnesota Council of Trout Unlimited

Minnesota Division - Izaak Walton League of America
Jill Crafton, Treasurer

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

National Environmental Trust

National Wildlife Federation
Andy Buchsbaum, Director - Great Lakes office

NE Minnesotans for Wilderness Action Fund

New York Rivers United
Bruce Carpenter, Executive Director

Ohio League of Conservation Voters
William DeMora, Executive Director

Saginaw Field and Stream Club
Jim DeClerck,

Save the Dunes Council
Thomas Anderson, Executive Director

Sierra Club
Emily Green, Director, Great Lakes Program

Southeastern Minnesotans for Environmental Protection

The Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay
Andy Knott, Executive Director

U.S. PIRG
Christy Leavitt, Clean Water Advocate

Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Steve Morse, Executive Director

Minnesota Waters
Bruce Johnson,

National Parks Conservation Association
Chad Lord, Director - Great Lakes Program

Nature Quebec
Marc Hudon, St-Lawrence/Great Lakes Program Director

New York Division - Izaak Walton League of America
Les Monostory,

Ohio Environmental Council
Kristy Meyer, Director of Clean Water Programs

Prairie Rivers Network
Glynnis Collins, Interim Executive Director

Save Lake Superior Association

Save the River
Jennifer Caddick, Executive Director

Sierra Club, North Star Chapter

The Ohio Environmental Council
Kristy Meyer, Director of Clean Water Programs

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Gail Gruenwald, Executive Director

West Michigan Environmental Action Council
Rachel Hood, Executive Director

Western Lake Erie Association
Sandy Bihn, President

Winous Point Marsh Conservancy
Roy W. Kroll, Executive Director

**Wisconsin Division of the Izaak Walton League
of America**
Gerald J. Ernst, President

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
George Meyer, Executive Director