

Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario
October 20, 2017

RESOLUTION

ENHANCING REGIONAL PROTECTIONS AGAINST AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

WHEREAS, since 2001, the Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region have worked together to stop the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in our region; and,

WHEREAS, AIS are a burden on the region's ecosystem, economy, and State and Provincial budgets, and pose a threat to human health; and,

WHEREAS, AIS cause immeasurable ecological damage to native species with consequences for our region's sport and commercial fisheries, tourism, recreation, and the entire regional economy; and,

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers renewed their commitment to work together to prevent the introduction of new aquatic invasive species, including collaborative actions to address invasive species already present in the region. This resulted in the development of a cooperative Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) designed to facilitate cooperative response actions and the sharing of staff, expertise and resources between jurisdictions in the event of detection of a new AIS that presents a serious threat to the Basin. As part of implementation of the MAA, the States and Provinces have collaborated to execute two joint, regional exercises to build cooperative response capacity in the event of an AIS detection; and,

WHEREAS, the Governors and Premiers also committed to prioritize stopping the introduction of the "least wanted" AIS through actions such as prohibiting or restricting the transfer of these species to and within the States and Provinces, and to seek their inclusion in similar federal lists. To date, the States and Provinces have taken more than forty separate actions against these sixteen high-risk species. In addition, in the U.S., four of these species were prohibited under the Lacey Act at the Governors' encouragement and in Canada, four of these species and one group of species (snakehead) were prohibited under the Canadian federal Fisheries Act; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Governors of Michigan and Ohio and the Premier of Ontario committed to develop an initiative to harmonize their approaches to address AIS and further their cooperation. This initiative first focused on risk assessment outcomes and strengthening partnerships with regional stakeholders.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, building on successes to date, the Governors and Premiers today commit to further bolstering the region's protections against AIS:

- The States and Provinces commit to explore opportunities to better coordinate AIS investigations, through means such as the Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Cooperative Enforcement Operations. This Memorandum was created to facilitate

information sharing and cross-jurisdictional investigations. It is applicable to both recreational users and commercial operators across all natural resource activities, and includes specific AIS provisions. This Memorandum has been used to aid in several inter-jurisdictional investigations pertaining to both invasive and endangered species. Current signatories include the States of Michigan, Minnesota, New York and Ohio, the Province of Ontario, Environment Canada, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

- The States and Provinces will commit to harmonizing the objectives of AIS regulations to strengthen the Basin-wide approach to AIS prevention and enforcement. Specific actions may include:
 - Expand/Update the “least wanted” AIS list and continue to take aggressive action against these high-risk species.
 - The States of Michigan and Ohio and the Province of Ontario will expand the focus of their harmonization initiative to document current regulatory approaches as well as existing fines and penalties for possessing, transporting, selling, purchasing, and introducing AIS.
 - Within two years, this harmonization initiative, working with the Great Lakes Law Enforcement Committee and the Governors’ and Premiers’ AIS Task Force, will work together to develop consistent approaches to AIS prevention and enforcement throughout the Basin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governors and Premiers further renew their 2013 commitments to enhance regional protections against AIS. In order to make further progress, State and Provincial natural resource managers in coordination with law enforcement officials will work collaboratively in coming years on issues such as:

- Improving information sharing among the jurisdictions, including development of consistent and routine reporting processes.
- Expanding the deployment of technologies and training to assist State and Provincial personnel in identifying and tracking AIS and offenders.
- Enhancing administrative and enforcement capacity such as through the development of AIS-specific enforcement units or specialists in each jurisdiction.

Adopted by the Governors of the Great Lakes States and the Premiers of Ontario and Québec on this 20th day of October 2017.