Joint U.S. – Canadian Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Resolution 26-02: A Resolution Supporting the Save the Great Lakes Fish Act of 2025

WHEREAS invasive mussels—zebra mussels *(Dreissena polymorpha)* and quagga mussels *(Dreissena bugensis)*—arrived in the Great Lakes from eastern Europe in the late 1980s in the ballast water of ocean-going ships, quickly establishing and exploding in numbers;

Whereas invasive mussels have significantly damaged ecosystems in both Canada and the United States over the last 30+ years through excessive filtering of phytoplankton, a critical part of the base of the food web, prompting a three-fold increase in water clarity, and crashes of important forage organisms for fish, such as the crustacean Diporeia and other arthropods.[1,2];

Whereas invasive mussels have been associated with avian botulism outbreaks in the Great Lakes Basin, which have caused the mortality of tens of thousands of birds[3];

Whereas invasive mussel microscopic larvae, called veligers, can attach themselves to hard substrates using their rootlike threads of protein (byssal threads) to firmly attach themselves to hard surfaces like boats, docks, rocks, and native mussels causing biofouling[3];

Whereas invasive mussels are responsible for significant economic effects, including reduced recreation and tourism through fouling of beaches and shoreline; millions of dollars in additional maintenance costs for water pipes, intake structures,

[1] Lower, E., Sturtevant, R., Iott, S. *et al.* (2024) The Great Lakes' most unwanted: Characterizing the impacts of the top ten Great Lakes aquatic invasive species. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*. 50(4), 102365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2024.102365

[2] U.S. Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (2025). Dingell, Walberg Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Combat Invasive Great Lakes Mussels. [Press Release]. https://debbiedingell.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=6353

[3] Minchin, D., **Lucy, F.**, & Sullivan, M. (2002). *Zebra mussel: Impacts and spread*. In E. Leppäkoski, S. Gollasch, & S. Olenin (Eds.), *Invasive aquatic species of Europe: Distribution, impacts and management* (pp. 135–146). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9956-6_15

and other infrastructure colonized by the mussels; and diminished revenue and property values for lakefront businesses and residents[1];

Whereas limited private and public research into the control of invasive mussels in Canada and the United States has yielded some promise using physical (e.g., crushing) and chemical (e.g., molluscicides) controls in targeted areas, an effective control method at management scale does not exist;

Whereas early binational efforts to eradicate invasive sea lamprey demonstrated the merits of coordinating and intensifying research on biological vulnerabilities that could be exploited for mass control;

Whereas owing to the biology, life history, dispersal and colonization mechanisms, large-scale control requires a significant investment of resources;

Whereas public concern about invasive mussels has spurred the creation of non-governmental teams to research and publicize mitigation efforts, -- Invasives Canada, Ontario Invasive Species Centre, U.S. National Wildlife Federation, Ontario Invasive Plant Council, and others;

Whereas Michigan representatives Debbie Dingell and Tim Walberg introduced the *Save the Great Lakes Fish Act* in November 2025, which acknowledges the past success of the GLFC and the sea lamprey control program, and would authorize $50 million annually for 10 years for the GLFC to coordinate with federal agencies, tribal, state, and local governments, and the broader scientific community on a structured effort to find a scientific community for structured investigation of potential control of invasive mussels;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the U.S. and Canadian Committees of Advisors call on Congress to pass bill H.R. 6053, beginning the process for coordinating a plan for invasive mussel control and allocating new funds for mussel control and research; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the U.S. and Canadian Committees of Advisors call on Commissioners to endorse H.R. 6053, and to immediately use all means necessary, including via outreach, workshops, and scientific conferences, to encourage Canada, the eight Great Lakes States, tribes, First Nations, and the Province of Ontario, to act in a similarly coordinated manner against the threat presented by invasive mussels in the Great Lakes system.

U.S. and Canadian Committees of Advisors
Passed unanimously June 3, 2026