Great Lakes Fishery Commission

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## JOINT U.S.–CANADIAN COMMITTEE OF ADVISORS URGES ACTION ON INVASIVE MUSSELS THROUGH PASSAGE OF THE SAVE THE GREAT LAKES FISH ACT

**ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN—** The Joint U.S.–Canadian Committee of Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Save the Great Lakes Fish Act of 2025 (H.R. 6053). The Act calls on the U.S. Congress to pass legislation asking the Commission to launch a coordinated effort to find a control solution that could be deployed to combat invasive zebra and quagga mussels throughout the Great Lakes basin.

Passed on June 3, 2026, the resolution highlights the severe ecological and economic impacts invasive mussels have had on the Great Lakes over the past three decades. Advisors note that zebra and quagga mussels, introduced through ballast water from ocean-going vessels in the late 1980s, have dramatically altered the food web, reduced populations of key forage organisms, increased water clarity by eliminating vital microorganisms, damaged infrastructure, and contributed to avian botulism outbreaks that have killed tens of thousands of birds.

"Invasive mussels continue to fundamentally alter the Great Lakes ecosystem and threaten the fish populations, communities, and economies that depend on these waters," the resolution states. The advisors contend that, despite decades of research, no effective large-scale control strategy currently exists for invasive mussels and that a coordinated research initiative is urgently needed.

The Save the Great Lakes Fish Act, introduced by Michigan Representatives Debbie Dingell (D) and Tim Walberg (R) in November 2025, would authorize $50 million annually for 10 years for the Commission to coordinate research and partnerships aimed at developing effective invasive mussel control technologies. The legislation also directs federal agencies to coordinate their efforts with the Commission. The legislation builds on the Commission's successful history of coordinating sea lamprey control efforts across the basin.

The Committee of Advisors' resolution calls on Congress to pass H.R. 6053 and encourages Great Lakes leaders—including federal, state, provincial, and Indigenous partners—to work collaboratively to address the invasive mussel threat. The advisors also urged the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to endorse the legislation and expand outreach, scientific collaboration, and stakeholder engagement to build support for a basin-wide strategy.

"Just as coordinated binational action helped reduce the devastating impacts of sea lamprey, a similarly ambitious effort is needed to confront invasive mussels," the resolution states. "The scale of the challenge demands a sustained commitment to scientific research, innovation, and international cooperation."

The Joint U.S.–Canadian Committee of Advisors consists of representatives from Indigenous, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, environmental, and public fishery interests throughout the Great Lakes Basin. The committee provides independent advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission on matters affecting Great Lakes fisheries and ecosystem health.

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*The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The Commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.*
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