



Monroe County Legislature

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To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

OFFICIAL FILE COPY
No. <u>080215</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature Of Monroe County
Committee Assignment
Memorializing Referral -L

Re: Memorializing the United State Senate to Pass, and President George W. Bush to Sign into Law the Ballast Water Treatment Act of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2008, H.R. 2830, to Protect the Great Lakes from Invasive Species.

Honorable Legislators:

Over the past two centuries, the introduction and infestation of an ever-growing number of invasive species continue to dramatically alter and impede the ecosystems of the Great Lakes. Here in Monroe County, we have been blessed with copious freshwater resources. Positioned on the banks of both Lake Ontario and the Genesee River, our community sits on one of the largest sources of accessible potable water in the world. However, with such privilege bears responsibility: a responsibility to maintain and protect the ecological health of Lake Ontario, as well as of all the Great Lakes, which serve as a critical freshwater resource for over 30 million people.

In 1988, the zebra mussel, a commonly known invasive species along the shorelines of Lake Ontario, was first introduced to North America through a ballast water discharge in Lake St. Clair. Less than a decade later, zebra mussel colonies have expanded into all five Great Lakes and into the Mississippi, Tennessee, Hudson, and Ohio River basins. According to the USGS, a single female zebra mussel will lay up to one million eggs per year. Invasive species, including the zebra mussels, cost governments and communities along the Great Lakes basin around \$120 billion annually to control, meanwhile every day new invasive species are being introduced to our region through ballast water uptakes and discharges in U.S. waters.

Currently before the U.S. Senate is H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2008, legislation sponsored by Congressman James L. Oberstar that will not only provide the USCG with needed resources and allocations, but also vital tools to better protect the

Great Lakes. Within this act, Title V, the Ballast Water Treatment Act of 2008, will amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990, specific to the Great Lakes. This legislation will prohibit the discharge of untreated ballast water, and provide the Coast Guard the needed authority to enforce such provision. This statute does allow exceptions to vessels of the Armed Forces and waivers for cases of substantial business hardship.

Through the enactment of this legislation, we can begin down the long journey towards restoring the ecological health and integrity of the Great Lakes. Therefore, I urge you to join me in memorializing the United States Congress to pass, and President George W. Bush to sign into law H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2008, including Title V, the Ballast Water Treatment Act of 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Beebe

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