



*THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST SENATE COALITION*

## **GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE**

October 31, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

Aquatic invasive species pose a grave threat to the Great Lakes. There are over 180 invasive species established in the Great Lakes, and on average, a new species is introduced every eight months. Because of this threat, we strongly support efforts to advance ballast water legislation.

In order to fully address the problem of aquatic invasive species, we will need a comprehensive solution that addresses all pathways of introduction, screening organisms entering the country for the first time, rapid response tools, and research. However, ballast water is the largest known pathway for aquatic organisms to enter into our waters, and addressing the ballast water component will be a very significant step forward in stemming the introductions of invasive species.

The Commerce Committee recently reported S. 1578, the Ballast Water Management Act. There are concerns about the legislation that need to be addressed prior to the Senate's consideration of the bill. Because of the seriousness of invasive species, it is important to double efforts to resolve those concerns, and we urge you to help find a compromise.

Preventing introductions of aquatic invasive species is a priority because these invaders cause tremendous economic, environmental and human health problems. It is critical that legislation addressing ballast water move through the Senate this year. We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

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George V. Voinovich  
United States Senator

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Carl Levin  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Norm Coleman  
United States Senator



Russ Feingold  
United States Senator



Barack Obama  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator