



November 20, 2015

Mr. Daniel Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Ashe:

The Council of Great Lakes Governors applauds the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its recent proposal to list species under the Lacey Act. These listings are an important step toward protecting our region and nation from harmful aquatic invaders.

In 2013, State and Provincial aquatic invasive species (AIS) experts identified four of these species – Yabby, Stone Moroko (topmouth gudgeon), Zander, and Wels Catfish – as posing an ecological risk if they were to enter the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. These species were included on the Governors’ and Premiers’ “least wanted” AIS list, which includes a total of 16 plant and animal species and is driving aggressive State and Provincial action to prohibit their transfer in the region.

For many years, the Governors and Premiers of the States and Provinces surrounding the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin have worked to prevent the introduction of AIS into our region’s waters. The more than 180 AIS that have been introduced in the Lakes and River cost the U.S. and Canada billions of dollars in damages each year, are a burden on the economy, and strain State and Provincial budgets. AIS pose threats to human health, cause immeasurable ecological damage to native species, and present major consequences for our region’s sport and commercial fisheries, tourism, recreation and industry.

The Great Lakes Governors encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to proactively list other “least wanted” animals under the Lacey Act such as killer shrimp, golden mussel and other AIS when risk assessment findings suggest they will jeopardize native fauna, habitats and economies. A unified approach between regional and federal actions is the most effective way to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin from AIS. Please let us know if we can further assist your efforts.

Sincerely,

David Naftzger
Executive Director

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