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“Least Wanted” List Protects the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin from Aquatic Invaders

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP) today announced the completion of State and Provincial actions against the 21 “least wanted” aquatic invasive species (AIS). New regulations adopted by Québec, which come into force today, prohibit numerous invasive plant species in Québec, including those appearing on the “least wanted” list.

The Governors and Premiers created this [list of fish, plants, and invertebrates](#) that present a high risk of invasion or spread within the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin in 2013. Since then, the region’s eight States and two Provinces, working through [GSGP’s AIS Task Force](#), have taken more than 100 actions to prohibit or restrict these high-risk aquatic invaders, including invasive carp.

Québec’s “Regulation respecting exotic invasive plant species” completes these regional actions. Ontario also used the “least wanted” list to develop its [Invasive Species Act of 2015](#). [In 2022, the State of Wisconsin](#) brought criminal charges against a wholesale fish dealer selling invasive carp, one of the “least wanted” list species that the State had banned. Overall, the “least wanted” list provides our region with a powerful tool to prevent the transfer and spread of AIS and protect the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin.

“It’s a monumental step - collectively moving forward to combat invasive species. The health of our waterways is vital to a robust and healthy economy and the communities we serve,” said Jean-François Hould, Delegate, Québec Government Office in Chicago.

Our region’s Governors and Premiers have now tasked GSGP with working with State and Provincial AIS and fisheries experts, as well as leading regional researchers, to review the “least wanted list” and evaluate other potential actions that can be taken proactively to prevent the transfer and spread of invasive species.

AIS cost the U.S. and Canada billions of dollars in damages each year, are a burden on the economy and strain State, Provincial, and federal budgets. They pose a threat to human health and cause immeasurable ecological damage to native species, with consequences for our region’s sport and commercial fisheries, tourism, and recreation. More than 180 nonnative species have been introduced into the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Basin.

GSGP unites the chief executives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. The Governors and Premiers work as equal partners to grow the region's \$9.3 trillion (us) economy and protect the world's largest system of surface fresh water. For more than 20 years, GSGP's AIS Task Force has coordinated State and Provincial efforts to combat AIS through strategic regional action.