



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



Resolution 18-02: Canada Fisheries Act Implementation

Whereas on February 6, 2018, the Government of Canada introduced Bill 68, proposing changes to the Canada Fisheries Act which are currently under public review, and

Whereas the proposed changes include a broadening of the species protected by the Act to include all fish species and reinstatement of the prohibition of “harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat” consistent with the foci on biodiversity and the ecosystem approach of Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the Lake Committees, and

Whereas, consistent with the rehabilitative focus of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the proposed changes include the requirement that fish stock rebuilding or habitat restoration, as appropriate, be considered for stocks that have fallen below their limit reference point and the prioritization of restoration of degraded fish habitat, rather than creation of new habitat, when authorizing future developments that cause harm to fish habitat, and

Whereas the proposed changes include improved control and eradication of invasive species that has been the focus of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission since its inception, and

Whereas the proposed changes include improvements to monitoring and enforcement, the former of which is fundamental to the scientific basis for the advice to the Parties of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the latter of which is an ongoing concern of the Commission, and

Whereas in February, 2018, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans committed an additional \$284M Canada-wide toward the implementation of the proposed changes, and

Whereas the proposed changes will generate additional funds from compensation required for projects that destroy fish habitat, and

Whereas implementation of the proposed changes needs to be coordinated with other fishery protection and restoration initiatives in the Great Lakes basin, and

Whereas the U.S. commits substantial funding annually through the Great Lakes Restoration

The opinions expressed here are those of the independent committee of advisors and not necessarily those of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives from First Nation, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors and appointed by the Commission. Canadian advisors are nominated by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Initiative in support of projects and programs that would be complemented by Canadian action to implement Great Lakes fishery protection and restoration priorities,

Be it resolved that the Canadian and U.S. Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission encourage the Commission to support a Fisheries Act that focuses on species and habitat in recognition of its better alignment with the foci of the Commission, and

Be it further resolved that the Canadian and U.S. Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission encourage the Commissioners to offer cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in the development of Great Lakes-tailored strategies for rehabilitating fish stocks, controlling aquatic invasive species, prioritizing fish habitat restoration actions, and coordinating recovery actions for species at risk with actions undertaken as part of implementing an amended Fisheries Act, and

Be it finally resolved that Canadian and U.S. Advisors urge the Great Lakes Fishery Commission advocate for the dedication of Great Lakes-specific funds for implementation of the revised Fisheries Act in the Great Lakes basin and that these funds be coordinated with any additional dedicated funds created in implementation of the Fisheries Act and the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health in the form of a Canadian Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that would address both the offsetting of impacts of new proposed developments and the strategic restoration of existing fishery impairments.

Passed unanimously
Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors
May 9, 2018