



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



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For Immediate Release**

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**GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION ADVISORS CALL FOR STRENGTHENING
GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE FUNDING**

*Binational advisory committee to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Seeks consistent and perpetual funding from both countries to protect and restore the Great Lakes*

Grand Rapids, MI—The U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission passed a resolution urging congress to create legislation permanently establishing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) as a funded program. In the resolution, Advisors also called upon the Government of Canada to increase its commitment to Great Lakes restoration, commensurate with the U.S. initiative.

The GLRI is a federally funded program that provides monies to strategically target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward long term health of the resource. During the Commission's 60th Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 2015, the committee of advisors, in recognition of the positive impact the GLRI has had on the Great Lakes' overall health the last seven years passed a resolution calling for Congress to formally legislate the GLRI into law. A copy of the resolution is available online at http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2015_1.pdf.

Despite the current support for the GLRI, advisors warned that the lack of a permanent authority for the initiative could lead to inconsistent funding on an annual basis. "Currently, GLRI funding depends on the President including the initiative in his proposed federal budget" said Captain Denny Grinold of the Michigan Charterboat Association, the chair of the U.S. Committee of Advisors. "I commend Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois and Congressman David Joyce of Ohio for introducing legislation to authorize the GLRI. Such an authorization would help ensure more consistent funding for ongoing projects; projects which improve the health of the Great Lakes and the regional economy."

Canada does not currently have a funding mechanism similar to the GLRI and, as such, the resolution also called upon the Canadian Government to create a program similar to the GLRI so that both nations would have a commensurate commitment to restoration. Said Dr. Tom Whillans of Trent University, chair of the Canadian Committee of Advisors, "The Canadian government must take Great Lakes restoration as seriously as the U.S. government. Without more financial input from Canada, the approach to protecting the resource will take us back to the 1950s, when management was parochial and ineffective."

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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 appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.