



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



**July 24, 2015
For Immediate Release**

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**FISHERY ADVISORS CALL FOR COMPREHENSIVE REGULATIONS PRIOR TO
EXPANSION OF NET PEN AQUACULTURE IN THE GREAT LAKES**

*Binational advisory committee to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission
concerned with potential impacts to the fishery from net pen aquaculture*

Grand Rapids, MI—The U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission recently passed a resolution calling for the Great Lakes States and Provinces to enact comprehensive regulations regarding proposed net pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes basin.

Aquaculture is the cultivation of fish in controlled environments, such as net pens that sit in open Great Lakes waters. Such operations are seen as providing economic benefits. However, dangers to the surrounding natural environment are also present, including fish borne disease transmissions, waste production and control, fish escapement, and genetic diluting of wild fish strains through unintended interbreeding. Net pen aquaculture already exists on a limited basis in the Great Lakes basin, notably several small fish farming operations in Ontario waters of northern Lake Huron. The resolution was in response to the State of Michigan's current process to consider the economic potential and possible impacts of establishing net pen aquaculture in Michigan waters of the Great Lakes. The resolution was passed during the Commission's 60th Anniversary Annual Meeting held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 10-11, 2015. A copy is available online at http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2015_2.pdf.

Dr. Tom Whillans of Trent University, the chair of the Canadian Committee of Advisors, said, "This resolution calls upon states and provinces to perform advance due diligence and institute comprehensive, effective regulations ahead of approving any net pen aquaculture facilities in the Great Lakes basin. Although advisors believe net pen aquaculture is not inherently harmful if it is done correctly, we are concerned about governments approving such operations without undertaking appropriate and reasonable study to prevent harm to the Great Lakes."

"The advisors recognize the potential economic benefit of aquaculture systems," added Captain Denny Grinold of the Michigan Charterboat Association, the chair of the U.S. Committee of Advisors.

"However, the numerous issues that have plagued net pen aquaculture in other parts of the world could irreparably damage our Great Lakes and the \$7 billion fishery if governments are too quick to approve operations in our Great Lakes."

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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.