



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



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**FISHERY ADVISORS PASS RESOLUTIONS ADDRESSING A VARIETY OF ISSUES THAT HAVE
THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF
GREAT LAKES FISHERIES**

Binational fishery advisory committee discussed water diversion, radionuclides, concentrated agriculture feed operations, marine sanctuaries, and net pen aquaculture

OTTAWA, ON—The U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission recently came together to discuss a number of critical issues during the Commission's 61st annual meeting in Ottawa, Ontario. The Committee of Advisors meets regularly to consider issues, share information, and provide advice to governments about the management of the shared Great Lakes fishery. Often, the committee is able to act as a whole, reflecting the concerns and opinions of advisors from both countries; there are certain issues or situations, however, whereby advisors from one country may elect to abstain from a resolution. This year, the committee passed three binational resolutions and two U.S.-only resolutions, described in more detail below.

Binational Resolutions

- 1. A Resolution Opposing Diversion of Great Lakes Water To Waukesha, Wisconsin** – The City of Waukesha applied for a water diversion permit under the Great Lakes Compact. While this request was approved on June 21, 2016, the U.S. and Canadian Committee of Advisors remain concerned that this case may set a dangerous precedent for future applications. A separate press release about this resolution is available online at: http://www.glfsc.org/staff/advisor_news/2016%20Advisor%20water%20diversion%20resolution_FINAL.pdf and the resolution is available at: http://www.glfsc.org/staff/resol2016_1.pdf.
- 2. A Resolution Calling For Radionuclides to be Designated as a “Chemical Of Mutual Concern”** – Radionuclides, or radioactive isotopes, can have very serious immediate, long-term and intergenerational negative effects on human and non-human health, including that of fish, even at very low levels of exposure. In the Great Lakes basin, there are a large number of facilities that contain, use, store, and dispose of radionuclides for power generation purposes and scientific studies have shown they accumulate in the internal organs and muscles of freshwater fish. New construction of additional facilities, extensions to and decommission of existing facilities throughout the Great Lakes basin pose further risk of additional radionuclides entering the ecosystem. The Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors, therefore, urges federal governments to designate radionuclides as a “Chemical of Mutual Concern” under Annex 3 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Act, and develop – with full involvement from the public – a binational strategy on radionuclides, which includes “research, monitoring, surveillance and pollution prevention and control provisions.” The resolution is available at: http://www.glfsc.org/staff/resol2016_2.pdf.

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.

- 1. A Letter to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) in Support of its Resolution on Concentrated Agriculture Feed Operations (CAFOs)** – One of the primary sources of nonpoint source pollution to the Great Lakes is the waste runoff generated from CAFOs. This agricultural runoff contains nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen; these contribute to harmful algal blooms, which degrade water quality for humans and fish. The GLSLCI resolution calls for stronger regulations to protect surface and groundwater while allowing for responsible operations, performance monitoring of control systems, outreach to the agricultural community, and recognition of exemplary operations. The U.S. and Canadian Committee of Advisors unanimously endorsed the GLSLCI resolution and also called upon the Commission to work with the jurisdictions in the Great Lakes basin to press for basin-wide standards and effective regulations. The letter is available at: http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2016_5.pdf.

U.S. Resolutions

- 1. A Resolution Calling For the Prohibition of Establishment of Any Net Pen Aquaculture Facilities in the U.S. Waters of the Great Lakes** – Recently, the State of Michigan Quality of Life Agencies (Depts. of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality) completed a process whereby the environmental, economic, regulatory, and social impacts of net pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes were evaluated. Based on these assessments, the U.S. Committee of Advisors passed a resolution calling on all jurisdictions to prohibit the establishment of any net pen aquaculture facilities in the U.S. waters of the Great Lakes to protect the water quality and fishery of the Great Lakes system. Net pen aquaculture already exists on a limited basis in the Canadian waters of the Great Lakes basin, notably several small fish farming operations in northern Lake Huron. A copy is available at: http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2016_4.pdf.
- 2. A Resolution Calling For Clarification in the Federal Ability to Impose Fishing Restrictions in Marine Sanctuaries** – In the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) establishes National Marine Sanctuaries in coastal communities to increase tourism and improve appreciation for marine resources and heritage. Management of each sanctuary varies depending on a Memorandum of Agreement developed between NOAA and the resident state(s). Recently, several new National Marine Sanctuaries have been proposed for establishment in the Great Lakes. The role of management the fishery in the Great Lakes basin, on the other hand, falls solely to the states, province, and tribes. The U.S. Committee of Advisors is supportive of National Marine Sanctuaries but is concerned that their establishment in the Great Lakes may allow the federal government to impose fishing restrictions in these areas. The resolution calls on NOAA to consult with and abide by the wishes of the state and tribal fishery management agencies in their efforts to establish sanctuaries in the Great Lakes. A copy of the resolution is available online at: http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2016_3.pdf.

Dr. Tom Whillans of Trent University, the chair of the Canadian Committee of Advisors, said, “These resolutions all generally call upon states and provinces to work together – something we here in the basin have a long history of doing well. The advisors are confident that these issues can be dealt with in a feasible, responsible, and timely fashion. Our job is to raise the red flag and we have done that; we hope the governments will respond accordingly to our call for action.”

“We have a deeply engaged and knowledgeable group of advisors serving on the committee,” said Captain Denny Grinold, chair of the U.S. Committee of Advisors. “Every time a new issue is brought up, it seems one of our folks is part of a committee or group dealing with that very topic. Everyone is here because he or she wants to do all that is possible to protect the Great Lakes and the \$7 billion dollar fishery it supports.”