



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



**A Resolution in Support of Implementing the Recommendation of the SAB's
Report Entitled Understanding Declining Productivity in the Offshore
Regions of the Great Lakes**

WHEREAS the International Joint Commission's (IJC) Science Advisory Board (SAB) completed a report (dated June 29, 2020) entitled *Understanding Declining Productivity in the Offshore Regions of the Great Lakes*;

WHEREAS the report includes a number of findings and a recommendation aimed at improving coordination between water quality and fishery management professionals;

WHEREAS the report helps improve the understanding of the ecosystem impacts of nutrients in both nearshore and offshore waters;

WHEREAS the report stresses the dichotomy that exists between excess nutrient levels in the nearshore while nutrient levels are declining in the offshore, with each phenomenon posing challenges;

WHEREAS the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) recognizes the complexity of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem and its interacting components of air, land, water, and living organisms;

WHEREAS Great Lakes governance is often siloed, whereby water quality professionals do not often make policies in consort with fishery management professionals, and vice versa;

WHEREAS the report is the first major effort to create a shared understanding among water quality and fishery management professionals in terms of understanding nutrients and productivity;

WHEREAS the report calls upon water quality and fishery management professionals to form partnerships to break down information barriers and silos and adopt an adaptive management framework that considers both upper and lower food webs;

WHEREAS the report notes the need to set targets for nutrient reductions under the GLWQA that considers ecosystem-level analyses to consider the impacts of nutrient policies on both the offshore and the nearshore;

WHEREAS the GLWQA explicitly embraces the ecosystem approach, and the report epitomizes the GLWQA's ecosystem approach;

WHEREAS the report presents eleven key findings concerning nutrients in the nearshore and offshore and eight major gaps in knowledge; and

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 indigenous, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, environmental, 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 appointed by the commission.

WHEREAS the report recommended that the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) “explore and implement opportunities and capacities for cooperative application of ecosystem forecasting science addressing nutrient and fisheries management in the Great Lakes” and to do so, the GLEC “should engage and partner with state and provincial fisheries and environmental agencies as well as with other national and binational agencies involved with monitoring and managing Great Lakes aquatic resources.”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors commend the SAB on the quality of the report and the effort to approach nutrients in the Great Lakes from an ecosystem perspective;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the advisors appreciate the contributions to this report from both water quality and fishery professionals and believe this collaboration represents a major advancement in breaking down traditional barriers and siloes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the advisors endorse the findings and the recommendation of this report and strongly urge continued dialogue to facilitate implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Great Lakes Fishery Commission contact the GLEC and facilitate the creation of an ad hoc or standing multi-agency Cooperative Ecosystem Monitoring and Modeling Advisory Committee, as recommended in the report, to review all components of the report’s recommendation, to consider the identified knowledge gaps, and to ensure the report’s recommendation is addressed; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the mandate of this Advisory Committee include a special focus on how to make management decisions that best take into account the needs of both the near-shore and the off-shore, and water quality and fish objectives.

Passed unanimously

May 25, 2021

U.S. and Canadian Committee of Advisors