



## Coast Guard Action on Invasive Species 'Too Slow, Has Too Many Loopholes'

**Ann Arbor, Mich. (October 2)**—Today, the U.S. Coast Guard is holding a hearing in Chicago, Ill., on a proposed rule to protect the Great Lakes and other U.S. waters from the introduction of aquatic invasive species via ballast water discharge.

**Andy Buchsbaum, co-chair of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition,** said:

“Invasive species from ballast water have infected the Great Lakes like a cancer. We need strong medicine to stop this disease, and we need it fast. The Coast Guard rule could be that medicine – but right now it’s too slow and it has too many loopholes.

“The Coast Guard has set a standard that is as environmentally protective as the toughest state law. That’s good. But the timeline for implementing the standard is weak. Ocean-going ships could avoid complying until after 2020. And there are loopholes that extend the deadline even farther. The Great Lakes will be irreparably damaged by that time.

“That’s like waiting until the patient dies before offering any medicine.

“People, businesses and cities are paying more than \$200 million per year in damages from invasive species, so it is important that the Obama Administration take the strongest action possible to stop any further invaders.

“The Obama Administration needs to get this right by making sure that both the Coast Guard rules and U.S. EPA permit provide the strongest possible protection to the people, communities and businesses that continue to pay the price for government inaction on the ongoing threat of invasive species.

“The Obama Administration needs to act swiftly to force foreign vessels to stop discharging into the Great Lakes and other U.S. waters harmful aquatic invasive species that impact our health, economy and way of life.”

The Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives Campaign is directed by the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition. The coalition is co-chaired by the National Wildlife Federation and consists of more than 100 environmental, conservation, outdoor recreation organizations, zoos, aquariums and museums representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

For more information visit: <http://www.healthylakes.org/>

**For Immediate Release:**

October 2, 2009

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