



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN

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May 23, 2007

To: Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Re: Support SB 119 Great Lakes Ballast Water Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 119, relating to ballast water management, making an appropriation, and providing a penalty. In an effort to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has joined with other Leagues in the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters, whose purposes are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues affecting the Lake Michigan watershed.

Aquatic invasive species are threatening America's waters, wildlife and economy. Invasive species cause about \$200 million in ecological and economic losses each year. Not only has the zebra mussel invaded Lake Michigan and many of our state lakes but the viral hemorrhagic septicemia or VHS which causes anemia and hemorrhaging has now infected fish in Lake Winnebago.

Lake Michigan League of Women Voters, environmental groups, scientists, sportsmen, boating equipment manufacturers, state agencies and the media agree that something needs to be done now. Since Congress has not passed comprehensive legislation to fight the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, now is the time for our Wisconsin state legislators to act. We need to protect Lake Michigan and our state lakes.

Invasive species are one of the worst threats to native biodiversity, inflicting damage to ecosystems, and to our local economies. They can push native species to extinction and harm a wide variety of industries, including fisheries and water supplies. Damages from, and control measures for, aquatic invaders cost this country tens of billions of dollars each year. In addition, the invasive species can ruin Wisconsin's tourism and sports- fishing, a huge economic loss.

Our organizations' members and supporters urge you to support SB 119, a bill that will reduce the introduction and spread of aquatic invaders by enacting standards for ballast water discharge of oceangoing vessels that use a port in this state.

Thank you.