

## **Resolution to Restore Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**

Whereas, the Great Lakes are one of the world's most important natural resources and are the largest surface water freshwater systems on the planet with 20% of the earth's freshwater; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes provide invaluable ecosystem habitat for all animals including fish and wildlife, are a valuable resource as a water supply for municipalities and industry and are also valuable for navigation and public recreation; and

Whereas, over the last two centuries human use of the Great Lakes has significantly harmed the Great Lakes ecosystem through municipal and industrial discharges, urban and rural runoff, deposit of toxic air emissions and destruction of fish and wildlife habitat in and adjacent to the lakes; and

Whereas, twelve years ago, the Healing Our Waters---Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) was formed consisting of more than 145 environmental, conservation, and outdoor recreation organizations and zoos, aquariums, and museums, including the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and created the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for the purpose of restoring and protecting North America's greatest freshwater resource: the Great Lakes; and

Whereas the HOW Coalition has been extremely successful in obtaining up to \$300 million dollars annually for the GLRI from the US Congress for the purposes of removal of legacy pollutants from the lakes and their contaminated harbors and tributaries, repairing municipal sewerage treatment plants and sewers, reducing urban and rural contaminated runoff; restoring fish and wildlife habitat and preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species such as Asian Carp into the Great Lakes system; and

Whereas, despite significant funding decreases in the Federal domestic budget over the last several years, the US Congress, in a highly bipartisan manner, has continually funded the GLRI at a very high funding level up to and including \$300 million annually; and

Whereas, the current President's proposed budget reduced the funding level for the GLRI from \$300 million to \$9 million, a 97% reduction.

Now therefore be it resolved that, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, at its Annual Meeting in Wisconsin Rapids on April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 calls on the US Congress and the President of the United States to restore funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for the next fiscal year to \$300 million in order to protect and enhance the Great Lakes; and

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation encourage the Governor and the Wisconsin Congressional delegation to support the restoration of the GLRI funding to \$300 million.

Submitted by the WWF Great Lakes Committee by Committee Chair Keith Pamperin and by the Wisconsin Federation of Great Lakes Sports Fishing Clubs by its President Bob Wincek