

## Invasive species flourish while a ballast water bill is bandied about in the legislature

One of the keys to restoring the Great Lakes is preventing new invasive species from making the Great Lakes their home. Governor Doyle, recognizing this fact, called for tighter restrictions on one of the primary modes of entry into the lakes in his Conserve Wisconsin agenda. Legislation to regulate ballast water in ocean-going ships, while discussed in the Capitol, has not been introduced, however. Without this long-overdue legislation we will see further introduction of destructive, invasive species such as the zebra mussel to the Great Lakes.

When invasive species reside in the Great Lakes, they make their way up-stream into Wisconsin's inland rivers and lakes. This in turn has a devastating effect on boating, swimming, fishing, and aquacultural industries. Estimates on the economic impacts of zebra mussels alone over the next decade range from \$500 million to \$5 billion per year. This means we are all paying the price for allowing invasive species into our waters!

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Zebra mussels encrust this current meter on the Great Lakes. Imagine what they are doing to habitats.

Pond scum and milfoil have taken over this propeller as well as this Wisconsin lake.

Photo credit: NOAA



Photo credit: WIDNR

## Invasive Species

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Clean Wisconsin is calling for legislation in the Wisconsin legislature to help prevent the introduction of aquatic invasives. Successful control of aquatic invasives will require creating environmental protection standards for ballast water and evaluating and implementing effective ship-board treatments and management measures. Legislation must be enacted in Wisconsin to:

- Establish a state program with ballast water management guidelines and incentives to eliminate introductions of new invasive species;
- Allow sampling of ships to limit introduction of new invasive species;
- Allow the DNR to inspect boats at boat ramps to ensure they are not transporting invasive species from one lake to another; and,
- Hold those responsible for introduction of aquatic invasive species accountable.

We can not afford to wait any longer. New invasive species that will cost everyone money and harm the Great Lakes ecosystem may be entering the lakes right now.

**Join thousands of others who care about clean water, clean air and clean energy. Become a Clean Wisconsin member today!**

Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy organization, protects Wisconsin's clean water and air and advocates for clean energy by being an effective voice in the state legislature and by holding elected officials and corporations accountable. Founded in 1970 as Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, Clean Wisconsin exposes corporate polluters, makes sure existing environmental laws are enforced, and educates citizens and businesses. On behalf of its 10,000 members and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects the special places that make Wisconsin such a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Photo credit GLNPO, EPA, Karen Holland



Purple loosestrife gone crazy on Lake Huron.

### THE ASK

The ask would be to contact their legislators and ask them to co-sponsor legislation. The timing of this issue (early stages) would lend itself well to a petition as well. A petition with individuals as well as organizations would make the most sense. I could write this up or we could ask Will to do it if you agree that it would be useful to have a petition.



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