



## Overview

The unchecked spread of aquatic invasive species is one of the most significant threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and economy. Zebra and quagga mussels along with Asian Carp are infiltrating lakes and rivers, while efforts to control sea lamprey cost \$16 million per year with limited success. Prevention is critical, as controlling an invasion is nearly impossible.

Ballast water from ships is a main source of invasive species, and up to \$200 million is lost annually due to invasions caused by ballast discharge. The Vehicle Discharge Act being considered by Congress would further weaken ballast water control by shifting regulatory authority and creating exemptions in the Clean Water Act.

## SAMPLE POLICY

National Sea Grant Law Center has a model state watercraft inspection law and a comparison of all existing state laws and the model, available here: <http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/projects/model-legal-framework/index.html>

## Other Resources

- National Wildlife Federation resources on invasive species: <https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Threats-to-Wildlife/Invasive-Species.aspx>
- Alliance for the Great Lakes resources on keeping invasives from spreading: <https://greatlakes.org/campaigns/keeping-invasive-species-out/>

## Strategies

Each state has the ability to enact laws and rules related to invasive species within its boundaries and to define those species. Below are four strategies states have employed to address AIS and ballast water issues.

- Formal or informal legislative caucuses, such as the Ohio Lake Erie Caucus, offer dedicated attention to water issues, including AIS.
- Coordinated monitoring between states coupled with increased management funding both federally and in state budgets.
- Updating and strengthening state Aquatic Invasive Species Action Plans.
- Increased awareness of AIS and the importance of strong ballast water standards for ecosystem and economic health.

