



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST HOUSE COALITION
GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

November 14, 2011

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr.
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street SW
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Papp,

As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, we respectfully urge the Coast Guard to finalize and issue its proposed Ballast Water Discharge Standard (BWDS) as soon as possible to reduce uncertainty among commercial stakeholders and put in place lasting protections for our nation's valuable waterways.

As you know, this issue has been of paramount concern to Members of Congress as well as the constituents who make up their water bordering districts. Ballast water has been identified as a common mechanism for the transfer of harmful invasive species that threaten the livelihood and recreation of the millions of residents who depend on them annually.

We understand that during your notice of proposed rulemaking, you received a larger than average volume of public comments and we appreciate and applaud your diligent work in responding to the concerns of the American people. However, we believe that these national standards are long overdue. Issuing these standards now would not only serve the best interests of the American people and the fragile ecosystems that surround us, but would help unify the national voice of regulators who have a stake in this critical issue.

Again, we thank you for your hard work and attention to this issue and look forward to working together to ensure that our current regulatory framework for ballast water management best meets the needs of our nation and its environment.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress

John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress