

July 10, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Reid and Leader McConnell

The organizations listed on the letterhead represent millions of hunters, anglers and other conservationists who are committed to ensuring the sustainability of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources. One of the biggest threats to sustainability of these native species and their habitats is non-native invasive and injurious species. In this global economy with universal trade and travel, the potential for movement of non-native species is virtually without limits. We therefore urge that you seize the opportunity before you to advance a bill that would regulate one significant aspect of this problem, that being ballast water management.

We acknowledge that this is a complex and contentious issue and that Congress has failed to conclude action on ballast water management for several years. However, a comprehensive legislative record on the need for this has been built over those several years; there is no need for us to repeat here those needs, merits and facts and information which are detailed in that record. Recent House passage of HR2830 by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 395-7 has brought the potential for passing ballast water legislation as close as it has ever been. Title V of that Coast Guard Reauthorization bill was thoroughly and painstakingly negotiated to address the concerns of the plethora of parties with interest in this issue. While it is not perfect, no legislation ever is. And it can

continue to mature in conference if you act expeditiously to pass a legislative vehicle to enable the bill conference.

We understand that there are continuing concerns with and objections to certain ballast water provisions and certain Coast Guard authorization provisions. However, we urge expeditious passage of a Senate bill to get to conference with HR2830 where those concerns can be adequately and appropriately addressed.

Thank you for your serious consideration of our concerns about the need for conclusive Congressional action to address this significant threat to the vitality and sustainability of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources.