

****Alliance for the Great Lakes**Don't Waste Michigan **Dwight Lydell Chapter - Izaak Walton League**Fenton - Izaak Walton League**Great Lakes Committee-Izaak Walton League**Great Lakes Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers**Great Lakes United**Grand Haven Charterboat Association**Illinois Council-Trout Unlimited**Ludington Area Charterboat Association**Michigan Division-Izaak Walton League**National Audubon Society**National Wildlife Federation**Nature Abounds**Ohio Buckeye All State Chapter-Izaak Walton League of America**Ohio Division-Izaak Walton League of America**Ohio Environmental Council**Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes**Salmon Unlimited **Save the Dunes**Save Lake Superior Association **The Nature Conservancy-Florida Chapter**The Wildlife Society**Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council**Trollers Unlimited **Vera Cruz Yacht Club****

January 3, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
269 Russell Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2202

Dear Senator Levin,

On behalf of the 26 undersigned organizations we are writing to encourage you to take the leadership role in the Senate to improve the regulation of the live wild animal trade and preventing future invasions by non-native species and animal diseases. We represent environmental, conservation, fishing, boating, and religious organizations from across the eight Great Lakes states, as well as organizations from the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species. We share a common priority of preventing and controlling aquatic invasive species.

The current Lacey Act injurious species listing approach is 111 years old, widely considered ineffective, and costs the nation both in terms of drastic environmental impacts and major avoidable economic impacts. As a leading import market, the United States receives hundreds of millions of live wild animals each year. At least 2,500 different species of non-native wildlife were imported to the United States in the last decade. Research indicates that more than 300 of those species are already known to be potential invaders or present disease risk, however the Lacey Act process to review and potentially regulate these species is unnecessarily long and typically occurs after the harmful species has been brought into the country. The Asian carp invasion is the prime

example of how federal reforms to screen species for risk *before* importation could save the nation's natural resources, and hundreds of millions of dollars in control costs.

Improvements in regulating the live wild animal trade will help protect the Great Lakes as well as the rest of the nation from purposefully imported invasive species. Reforms we believe are necessary should be based on the principles articulated by the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species, including:

- Maintains consistency with existing law as far as definitions, burdens of proof and prohibited acts.
- Exempts all “domesticated” taxa from possible regulation.
- Provides immediate administrative relief for injurious species listings
- Mandates pre-import risk screening for all new non-native wildlife within a reasonable number of years after enactment.
- Establishes a precautionary regulatory category of “Not Authorized Pending Risk Analysis.”
- Provides USFWS authority to make emergency regulatory decisions.
- Provides USFWS authority to regulate wildlife disease risks.
- Includes user fees to help pay for risk screening program.
- Enhances State/Federal cooperation.
- Provides some “grandfathering” assurance to pet owners that they won’t be criminalized.

Our organizations are asking you to take a lead sponsorship role and will support your efforts in seeing a proactive bill to reform the Lacey Act introduced. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Nalbone from Great Lakes United at: jen@glu.org or (716) 213-0408 with any questions.

Sincerely,

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