

**Tuesday, August 21st at 1:30pm at MUCC headquarters in Lansing**

**Purpose: Ballast Water Update Meeting**

**Attendees: Great Lakes Stakeholders, directors and staff from several state conservation agencies, other related organizations.**

A welcome was given by Erin McDonough, Executive Director of MUCC. She introduced Dan Wyant, director of the Michigan DEQ. Director Wyant gave an overview of the history of the ballast water legislation dating back to 2006, whereby all ships with ballast tanks that have floated on salt water and then expect to use Michigan ports must either keep their ballast onboard or use a state-approved method to treat the aquatic life in outgoing water.

Recently, new legislation SB1212 introduced by Senator Mike Green (R – Mayville) stipulates that ships would only have to flush their ballast water tanks with salt water before entering. This is the method that has been traditionally used, and it is effective, but not failsafe. The shipping industry which supports the new legislation, according to director Wyant, claims that the current standards in Michigan are restrictive and putting Michigan at a competitive disadvantage and that new job opportunities in the shipping industry are being lost because of it. According to Director Wyant, proof of economic impact as it relates to potential new shipping jobs that would be created with passage of SB1212 has been requested of groups supportive of this legislation but no concrete numbers or documentation has been provided to date. The hope is to continue to look for a win-win situation.

Currently, this legislation is in the Senator Tom Casperson's Committee on Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes awaiting a hearing on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, Bill Creal, Chief Water Resources Division of the DEQ, gave an overview of the US Environmental Protection Agency's draft Vessel General Permit. This permit which regulates ballast water and other discharges is also under review. Under the Clean Water Act, states must certify that any proposed federal permit meets the state water quality standards. States can also establish additional requirements or limitations that the state determines are necessary to comply with state water quality standards and have until October 1<sup>st</sup> to do so.

Director Patti Birkholz, Office of the Great Lakes also gave her perspective. Input was sought from attendees, and impact of invasive species on tourism and other environmental areas in Michigan was the topic of much conversation.

Meeting adjourned approximately 3:30 p.m.