

# *Media Release*



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## **Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters applauds invasive species, sea lamprey and Great Lakes funding in Federal budget**

For almost two decades, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.) has urged the federal government to provide funding to address the problem of alien invasive species in the Great Lakes and across Canada, which are the second greatest threat to biodiversity and a primary threat to species at risk. Yesterday's announcement includes badly needed funding for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, (G.L.F.C.) Sea Lamprey Control Program, which is critical to the health of many species in the Great Lakes and the survival of the \$4 billion sport fishery and the thousands of jobs it supports. With the provision of \$85 million in direct funding for invasive species and an additional \$40 million in funding for the Great Lakes ecosystem, the federal government has taken a significant step in the right direction.

"We are pleased that after so many years of hard work by the O.F.A.H., the G.L.F.C. and the International Joint Commission, (I.J.C.), and Parliamentarians like Paul Steckle, M.P. for Huron-Bruce, that the federal government has stepped up and recognized the importance of providing direct funding to halt the spread of invasive species and to prevent new invasives from making their way into our fragile ecosystem," said Mike Reader, O.F.A.H. Executive Director. "The Great Lakes, which represents 1/5 of the world's fresh surface water are the hardest hit area in North America by invasive species like zebra mussels, sea lamprey and the round goby, which threaten the productivity, function and integrity of the entire system. We look forward to hearing how the funding will be apportioned and welcome the government's provision of additional funding to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem."

The commitment of federal funding for invasive species in the 2005 budget responds to previous reports from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, O.F.A.H. presentations to House of Commons Standing Committees on the Environment and Fisheries and Oceans and the I.J.C.'s 11<sup>th</sup> biennial report in 2002, all of which pointed out the need for urgent action. The funding also builds on the 2004 announcement by the federal government of An Alien Invasive Species Strategy for Canada, which is currently in development.

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Contact: Greg Farrant  
Government Relations Manager  
(705) 748-6324  
(705) 875-0274 cell

Francine MacDonald  
Invasive Species/Aquatics Biologist  
(705) 748-6324