

WHEREAS, Zebra mussels, which have invaded the Great Lakes and are causing billions of dollars of economic damage to that region by clogging water intake pipes, damaging property, and altering the ecology of the Great Lakes ecosystem, arrived in the Great Lakes through the discharge of ballast water from ships originating in foreign ports; and

WHEREAS, Any future invasion could have catastrophic ecological and economic impacts for the region; and

WHEREAS, Individual states are limited in their power to set policy regarding ballast-mediated nonindigenous species invasions because they lack the Constitutional authority to affect interstate and international trade; and

WHEREAS, Most U.S. efforts to manage ballast water originate from the federal Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-646) which establishes mandatory ballast water management protocols for the Great Lakes and Hudson River but does not afford protection for the Chesapeake Bay or other at-risk coastal regions; and

WHEREAS, Given this limitation, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, in its capacity as the legislative arm of the Chesapeake Bay Program, engaged regional and national experts in a yearlong effort to develop and recommend policies to improve the management of ballast water in the Chesapeake Bay in order to reduce the risk of nonindigenous species invasions; and

WHEREAS, Based on this review, the in-transit exchange of ballast water in open ocean environments represents the best currently available method of reducing the risk of nonindigenous species invasions via ballast water but still permits some species introductions, and therefore other technological solutions must be found; and

WHEREAS, Data collection and education are key components of reducing the risk of ballast-mediated invasions, and require the cooperation of and participation by the shipping industry, port authorities, federal agencies, and other stakeholders throughout the Chesapeake Bay region; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia delegations to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, because of their concern about the issue of ballast-mediated nonindigenous species invasions, voted to introduce resolutions detailing their findings and recommendations in the General Assemblies of all three states; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General Assembly formally recognizes the national and international scope of ballast-mediated introductions and calls for a concerted federal effort that addresses at-risk coastal regions, such as the Chesapeake Bay; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, in order to accomplish this, the General Assembly urges the federal government to implement programs and fund research to help prevent the introductions of nonindigenous species via ballast water into the Chesapeake Bay and other at-risk coastal regions; and be it further