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INVASIVE SPECIES – GREAT LAKES

FIRST TEST SCHEDULED AT NEW BALLAST TREATMENT FACILITY

Washington, D.C. – Ballast discharge from commercial ships is a leading source of aquatic pest species in the Great Lakes and globally. The Great Ships Initiative (GSI), is a multi-stakeholder effort managed by the Northeast-Midwest Institute and funded by ports and government agencies. Its mission is to accelerate the development of and use of effective treatment systems designed to minimize the presence of live organisms in discharge from ships ballast systems into the Great Lakes and elsewhere. GSI recently opened a facility in Superior, WI to test various technologies designed to clean ballast waters. Seakleen™, a ballast water treatment system marketed by Hyde Marine, Inc., will be the first such system to be tested.

Shipboard ballast treatment is the most promising solution to the discharge problem, but assessing the potential effectiveness of candidate systems at high flow rates typical of ships ballast systems poses an obstacle to evaluating such systems. To address this problem, GSI constructed and has begun operating a major state-of-the-art ballast treatment testing facility in Duluth/Superior Harbor. The first large-scale testing (1500 gallons per minute flow rate) is planned for October, pending final clearance by the City of Superior.

“This fall’s tests will allow us to ‘test drive’ the GSI facility so we can learn how to make our assessments of treatment performance there as accurate as possible in the coming months,” said Allegra Cangelosi of the Northeast-Midwest Institute, who is responsible for overall project management. “At the same time, the tests will help us assess the actual performance of the Seakleen™ system – one of the leading commercial candidates for ballast water treatment - under high flow conditions and in the freshwater context”. The Executive Committee of the GSI chose Seakleen™, a chemical treatment which degrades in sunlight, for the preliminary trials in part because it already has been tested at the bench, pilot and shipboard scales in salt water environments, and is currently undergoing review by the EPA for registration as a marine pesticide for use as a ballast treatment system.

Both the University of Wisconsin Superior and the University of Minnesota Duluth participate in the testing at the GSI facility. Financial support for GSI has come from the Department of Transportation, the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Organizations (U.S. and Canada), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. and Canadian Ports.

For more information about the GSI, go to www.greatshipsinitiative.org; for more information about the Northeast-Midwest Institute, go to www.nemw.org.