

Reps. Heck, Thompson, and Amodei Introduce Bipartisan Bill Adding Quagga Mussels to National Invasive Species List



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Spread of quagga mussels threaten environment, economy

Washington, DC – U.S. Reps. Joe Heck (NV-03), Mark Amodei (NV-02), Mike Thompson (CA-05), today announced that they introduced H.R. 1823, the *Protecting Lakes Against Quagga (PLAQ) Act of 2013* which would add quagga mussels to the national list of invasive species. This listing gives federal agencies greater ability to prevent the spread of the invasive species.

"Quagga mussels pose a constant threat to our local environment and economy. In Nevada, the Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam alone spends \$1 million annually on quagga mussel control," said Rep. Joe Heck. **"This is a commonsense, bipartisan piece of legislation that will ease the burden on taxpayers in Nevada, protect Lake Mead from further being invaded by this species, and prevent other lakes across the country from being affected in the future."**

"These invasive species wreak havoc on boats, concentrate pollutants and litter shores with razor sharp shells," **said Rep. Mike Thompson.** "When these mussels clog pipes, they suppress our ability to deliver water, protect our communities against fires, and irrigate farms. This bill will help us prevent the spread of quaggas and save taxpayers millions in maintenance costs."

"Halting the spread of the invasive quagga mussels is vital from practical and environmental perspectives," **said Rep. Amodei.** "The quaggas do costly damage to our water infrastructure, which in the West is a serious matter, and they pose a threat to ecosystems, such as Lake Tahoe, which we work so hard to protect. If we wait for administrative action to declare the quaggas an invasive species, it may already be too late."

The most common way for quagga mussels to spread from lake to lake is by "hitchhiking" on recreational boats. Listing quagga mussels as an invasive species will give federal agencies more authority to check boats crossing state lines or entering federal land.

While quagga mussels can only spread by "hitchhiking," once they are established in a lake they multiply quickly and are extremely expensive and difficult to remove.

Since their invasion in the 1980's, quagga mussels, and their close relative zebra mussels, have cost more than \$5 billion in prevention and control – more than any other aquatic species. While zebra mussels are on the invasive species list, quagga mussels are not.

In Nevada, Lake Mead, Lahontan Reservoir, and Rye Patch Reservoir have all been affected by quagga mussels. The PLAQ Act would help ensure that these mussels do not reach Lake Tahoe, and stop any further invasions into the already affected lakes.

This legislation is supported by: Governor Brian Sandoval (NV); Nevada Department of Wildlife; Northwest Power and Conservation Council; Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; Washington Invasive Species Council; Pacific Fisheries Legislative Task Force; New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife; Oregon Invasive Species Council; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Colorado Weed Management Association; and Colorado Lake and Reservoir Management Association.

Administrative action to put quagga mussels on the invasive species list takes an average of 10 years. HR 1823 would do the same thing right now.

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