

STATEMENT

Trudeau government inaction on the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is damaging bilateral relations between Canada and the United States

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, ON – The Hon. Michael Chong, Conservative Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Rick Perkins, Conservative Shadow Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, issued the following statement in response to reports that senior United States congressional leaders raised the issue of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) in a meeting with the Prime Minister:

“For some time, Conservatives have called on the Trudeau government to resolve a longstanding irritant in the bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States: Canada’s funding shortfall for the GLFC. On numerous occasions, we have raised this issue directly with the government. On November 30, 2020, we wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard about the GLFC. We also raised this issue with the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Committee of the Whole on May 31, 2021, as well as on social media, including on June 9 and 22.

“In addition, U.S. Senators and Representatives continue to raise issue directly with the Canadian government. On three separate occasions, April 22, 2016, April 13, 2021 and April 27, 2021, 13 U.S. Senators and 4 Representatives wrote to the Canada’s Ambassador voicing their concerns about Canada’s funding shortfall for the GLFC.

“The GLFC was established under a bilateral treaty, the *1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries*. This Commission coordinates fisheries research and facilitates cooperative fishery management, including controlling the sea lamprey population, which threatens the viability of the native fish in the Great Lakes.

“The Great Lakes are a binational treasure of Canada and the U.S., containing approximately 20% of the world’s surface fresh water. The inaction on this file is a demonstration yet again of the disconnect between this government’s rhetoric on the environment and reality.

“It is astounding the Trudeau government has allowed a relatively small and easily resolved issue to grow into a bilateral irritant. How can the Trudeau government expect to resolve larger issues, such as softwood lumber and “Buy American” policies, if they cannot fix a relatively small issue as this one?”

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