

**LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE  
POSITION STATEMENT**

**On**

***Productivity and Rainbow Smelt***

As the Committee has pointed out for the past several years, the Lake Erie ecosystem has experienced declines in productivity that are most pronounced in the East Basin.

With respect to rainbow smelt, the Committee would like to point out that rainbow smelt is an exotic species that flourished in Lake Erie at a time when productivity was higher and predator populations were low. The conditions were well suited to smelt at that time. In the 1990s we have observed significant declines in smelt in the East Basin.

Given the changes that are occurring in the East Basin with respect to top-down and bottom-up effects, the expectation for a large, stable supply of smelt in the East Basin is not high. Should we experience further productivity declines in the Central Basin, similar concerns over smelt may emerge there as well.

**Adopted:**

Annual Lake Erie Committee Meeting  
March 24, 1997  
Ann Arbor, MI