

December 3, 2009

Honorable J.B. Van Hollen
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Honorable Greg Zoeller
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Honorable Richard Cordray
Attorney General of Ohio
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Honorable Tom Corbett
Attorney General of Pennsylvania
Strawberry Square, 16th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Attorneys General,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing hundreds of thousands of members across the Great Lakes basin, we strongly encourage you to take legal action to stop the invasion of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes by Asian carp from the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC) and Cal-Sag Channel. We urge you to consider joining with Michigan, should that state take legal action, and also to take independent actions to address this Great Lakes emergency.

Currently, Attorney General Mike Cox is considering all legal options to close, at least temporarily, all Illinois locks providing access to Lake Michigan and to install structures to permanently separate Lake Michigan from the Canal system.

As you know, new testing shows the presence of Asian carp DNA past the electric barrier in the CSSC and adjacent to the O'Brien Lock just 6 miles south of Lake Michigan in the Calumet River, nearly 20 miles closer than previous tests had shown. This state of emergency requires quick and decisive action. Closing all the locks immediately may be a temporary solution, but the stakes are too high and we must act immediately. Allowing the invasive carp into Lake Michigan would be catastrophic for the Great Lakes.

We strongly support the current and ongoing Illinois Department of Natural Resources emergency plans to treat 6 miles of the CSSC between the barrier and the Lockport Lock and Dam, as well as spot treat areas around the O'Brien Lock, with rotenone, a fish-killing poison. While we do not endorse the use of rotenone as a long-term management strategy, we hope that this largest rotenone treatment ever undertaken will safely block passage of the carp for a few

days while essential maintenance of the CSSC is performed, and also provide validation of the eDNA detection method in Cal-Sag waters.

The potential catastrophe of an Asian carp invasion mandates that we move immediately to precautionary closure of all the locks to give the state and federal agencies time to review the findings from the DNA testing and rotenone treatment and develop a plan of action to respond to this crisis.

Known to batter boaters and even knock them into the water at the sound of a passing motor, Asian carp are voracious filter feeders that can grow to more than 4 feet long, weigh up to 100 pounds and quickly dominate aquatic ecosystems by gobbling up the same food that sustains native fish populations. This could result in the collapse of the Great Lakes food web.

If the carp invade the Great Lakes, they could devastate the region's \$7 billion fishing industry and permanently alter how recreational boaters, anglers and tourists use and enjoy the lakes and their many tributaries. Invasive species are estimated to cost Great Lakes states, business and communities over \$200 million per year.

Given the unprecedented emergency situation facing the Great Lakes, engaging in your own and /or supporting any legal action that the state of Michigan or others pursue to close all the locks in the Canal will ensure the state of Illinois, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard use all the tools necessary to prevent the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. We know from bitter experience the devastating impacts of invasive species on the Great Lakes. Too rarely do we have the opportunity to prevent the damage of invasion before it begins, yet such an opportunity is now on our doorstep. There are no second chances. Your actions are crucial to the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem and our economy. We cannot miss this opportunity to protect the lakes from these fish and their devastating legacy.

Thank you for your quick attention to this very serious threat. We look forward to working with you throughout this state of emergency.

Sincerely,

Andrew Buchsbaum
Regional Executive Director
National Wildlife Federation

Erin McDonough
Executive Director
Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Joel Brammeier
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St Clair Channelkeeper

Cyndi Roper
Michigan Director
Clean Water Action

cc: Honorable Mike Cox, Attorney General of Michigan