



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST CONGRESSIONAL COALITION
GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

December --, 2009

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works
U.S. Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon, Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Admiral Thad W. Allen
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20593

The Honorable Sam D. Hamilton
Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Darcy, Administrator Jackson, Admiral Allen, and Director Hamilton:

We are writing today to emphasize the urgency for keeping the Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. Recently, testing has found genetic material from Asian carp above the electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal. We urge all of your agencies to work cooperatively and expeditiously to prevent the carp from entering the Great Lakes.

Specifically, we urge your agencies to immediately consider:

- Implementing the recommendations of the Asian Carp Rapid Response Project. This project is a federal/non-federal partnership of leading experts.
- Closing the O'Brien and Chicago Locks if there is reasonable likelihood that Asian carp are above the barrier.
- Continuing the use of piscicides as a rapid response measure.
- Creating a possible permanent hydrological separation between the Great Lakes and the Canal.
- Increasing the voltage of the electric dispersal barrier to prevent Asian carp of any size from crossing the barrier.

- Drafting and approving the planned interim reports as part of the Efficacy Study, which was authorized under section 3061 of WRDA 2007, in order for the Corps of Engineers to take action to prevent Asian carp from bypassing the existing electric dispersal barrier project in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

In addition to finding positive eDNA in the Canal, genetic material was also found in the Des Plaines River, north of the electric dispersal barrier. Given the risk that the carp could bypass the barrier if the Des Plaines River were to flood, Congress provided the Corps with additional authority in the Fiscal Year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations bill to prevent this from happening. We understand that work on this report is on-going, and it is urgent that an interim report be finalized soon.

Finally, we encourage you to carefully consider your Fiscal Year 2011 budget needs for the barrier project and Asian carp efforts. Over the life of the barrier project, Congress has had to provide new authority and new funding on multiple occasions, and a comprehensive, planned approach would be more effective.

There may be no greater threat to the ecosystem of the Great Lakes than the introduction of the Asian carp, and we must do all that we can to prevent this from happening. We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

George V. Voinovich
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Mark Kirk
Member of Congress

John Dingell
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress
