



November 10, 2009

Governor Jim Doyle
Chair, Council of Great Lakes
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Madison, WI 53707

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
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Governor David A. Paterson
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Governor Ted Strickland
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Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr
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Governor Tim Pawlenty
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Governor Pat Quinn
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Governor Edward G. Rendell
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Re: Imminent threat of Asian carp entering Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes

Dear Great Lakes Governors,

We should all learn from past mistakes of failing to prevent invasive species from entering the Great Lakes. Invasive species are estimated to cost Great Lakes States, businesses and communities over \$200 million per year. The old saying an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is certainly applicable to the current threat posed by Asian carp, which could result in an ecological disaster for the Great Lakes and the region's commercial and recreational fishery if they invade the Lakes.

Asian carp feed near the bottom of the food chain. Their voracious feeding habitats could cause the collapse of the Great Lakes food chain, which is already fragile due to the loss of *diporeia*, an important food source for fish. Asian carp, which grow to over 100 pounds and four feet long, have the ability to muscle out and starve our native fishes and

this could result in a collapse of the remaining Great Lakes commercial and recreational fishery. The list of Great Lakes Species at Risk that would be threatened by these invasive carp is long and includes American eel; lake sturgeon; three species of cisco; black striped minnows; Warmouth sunfish; several species of shiners; and the Atlantic salmon. As you know, Lake Sturgeon and Atlantic salmon have only recently begun to re-establish self-sustaining populations in the Great Lakes and are very important to the recreational fishery.

Once in Lake Michigan, the Asian carp could quickly make their way into all the Great Lakes and its tributary rivers. A Risk Assessment study for the Asian carp was recently carried out by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and found that the risk of invasion is "high" and that the carp infestation could reach as far north as Canada's Arctic waters.

The undersigned Great Lakes Waterkeeper organizations are today writing to request that you immediately ask the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency, which will allow Federal agencies to enact emergency measures to prevent the invasion of Asian carp from the Chicago Shipping and Sanitary Canal into Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes.

The federal government must declare a state of emergency, so that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard have the authority to do what is necessary to stop the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes. This is the opportune time for such measures because of the planned shut down of the electric barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal for maintenance, and due to recently revealed hydrological connections between the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC) with the Des Plaines River and the Illinois & Michigan Canal (I & M Canal) during high flows and possibly low flows as well.

Request 1: Request declaration of federal state of emergency and hydrologic disconnection of the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal from all adjacent waterways and Lake Michigan

The declaration of a federal state of emergency will give the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard the tools necessary to prevent the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes system. While we understand that the U.S. Congress has recently approved \$6 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to study the problem, we ask you to request that the use of these funds be expanded to allow federal agencies to put in place whatever physical measures are needed to temporarily hydrologically disconnect the CSSC from the adjacent Des Plaines River, I & M Canal, and Lake Michigan. This could include construction of berms and sealing off of natural hydrological connections. This is particularly important as Asian carp have now been found upstream of the electrical barriers on the CSSC in adjacent waterways.

Additionally, when the electric barriers on the CSSC are turned off for routine maintenance, the locks from the CSSC to Lake Michigan need to be closed and a filter

screen attached to these structures to ensure the carp do not pass these physical barriers. After that, the control gates can continue to operate as normal, but filters must be placed on these structures so that the Asian carp cannot swim through them.

A long term solution has to be found because turning off the electric barriers for routine maintenance creates an unacceptable risk for the migration of the Asian carp into the Great Lakes. Ultimately, we would encourage the Great Lakes Governors to seek permanent closure of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal as the only sure way to keep these dangerous fish from slipping through control structures into Lake Michigan.

Request 2: Request U.S. Supreme Court to review the Chicago Diversion in light of the imminent threat posed by Asian carp entering the Great Lakes

We are further requesting that you appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Chicago Diversion (via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal) to ensure that all hydrological connections (except the control gates for the Chicago diversion at the mouth of the Chicago River) to the Great Lakes be disconnected in light of the imminent threat of Asian carp invading the Great Lakes.

Action taken to broaden the use of the allocated \$6 million for emergency measures and an expedited request to the U.S. Supreme Court are needed immediately by our Great Lakes Governors to save our precious Great Lakes, the rivers that feed them, and the fragile ecosystems that depend on the Great Lakes. Lack of action now on the Asian carp could have a devastating result to 95% of our nation's fresh surface water ecosystems, and result in years and millions of dollars wasted to control a problem that is still avoidable today.

Thank you for your attention to this serious threat.

Sincerely,

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