



Great Lakes Fishery Commission

ESTABLISHED BY CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES TO IMPROVE AND PERPETUATE FISHERY RESOURCES

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Great Lakes Fishery Commission Hails Introduction of Essential Barrier Legislation

Legislation designed to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes

ANN ARBOR, MI—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission today commended Senator Richard Durbin (IL) and Representative Judy Biggert (IL) for introducing legislation to authorize the construction of an invasive species dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The barrier, motivated by the impending Asian carp invasion, is designed to prevent the passage of species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

Asian carp escaped from southern aquaculture facilities in the early 1990s and have been making their way toward the Great Lakes since. The carp are well-suited to the Great Lakes environment, are voracious eaters, and reproduce in massive numbers. Their impact on the Mississippi River, as they migrated northward, has been devastating. Should the Asian carp enter the Great Lakes, biologists predict, their impact could be even more devastating than some of the worst invaders like sea lampreys and zebra mussels.

“I applaud Senator Durbin and Representative Biggert for introducing this badly needed legislation,” said Commission Vice-Chair Gerry Barnhart, Director of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources for the State of New York. “Without this legislation and the barrier it authorizes, Asian carp and other species would have a clear pathway to Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes. We must do everything possible to keep these fish out.”

“The Fishery Commission urges immediate action to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes,” said Commissioner David Ullrich, Director of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “Stakeholders, state agencies, tribal governments, local governments, and other regional bodies are in broad agreement that completion of the carp barrier is long overdue and must move forward now. Long term operation of the barrier must be provided for, as well.”

Barnhart concluded: “The Great Lakes Fishery Commission particularly appreciates Senator Durbin’s and Representative Biggert’s proactive approach to this issue. They understand that it is far better to prevent a biological invasion than to try to contain or control a species once it enters a system.”

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