



GREAT LAKES LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

*InterContinental Hotel
Chicago, Illinois
December 11-12, 2009*

Proposed Resolution on Keeping Asian Carp Out of the Great Lakes

- WHEREAS,** As the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, the Great Lakes are a precious and irreplaceable natural resource; and
- WHEREAS,** The Great Lakes are threatened by the introduction of Asian carp – invasive species that escaped from confinement in the South and, since the 1990s, have been making their way up the Mississippi River toward Lake Michigan; and
- WHEREAS,** Asian carp are voracious eaters that can consume 40 percent of their body weight in food daily, therefore their introduction into the Great Lakes ecosystem could result in a catastrophic decline in native fish populations as the carp outcompete other fish for food; and
- WHEREAS,** A decline in native fish populations in the Great Lakes would seriously threaten the region's multi-billion dollar fishing industry; and
- WHEREAS,** The tendency of one Asian carp species – silver carp – to jump up to six feet out of the water when startled by boat engines could not only result in injuries to pleasure boaters and other persons engaged in recreational activities on the Great Lakes, but also potentially cause harm to a recreational industry valued as high as \$9 billion; and
- WHEREAS,** Many jurisdictions in the U.S. and Canada have spent years working cooperatively to devise a solution to the Asian carp problem, the cornerstone of such efforts being the erection of two electric barriers (Barriers I and IIA) in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, 20 miles downstream from Lake Michigan, to repel the fish; and
- WHEREAS,** Environmental DNA samples collected in September and October 2009 confirmed that Asian carp may have breached these barriers and may be within eight miles of Lake Michigan; and
- WHEREAS,** In an urgent attempt to keep Asian carp out of Lake Michigan, state governments are considering legal action to force the temporary closure of the three locks that allow boats to pass from Lake Michigan into the waterways that feed into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal; and

- WHEREAS,** Regardless of the states' pursuit of legal action, it is clear that, while the multi-agency Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup completes its comprehensive investigation and analysis of the situation, immediate and decisive action must be taken to avert the potentially disastrous result of the Asian carp reaching Lake Michigan; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus calls upon federal and state authorities to take immediate, aggressive action to keep Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes and their tributaries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus proposes that such immediate actions should include, at a minimum, ongoing monitoring for the presence of Asian carp in the Great Lakes and their tributaries; the continued use of pesticides such as rotenone to eradicate Asian carp, increasing the voltage of electric Barrier IIA to its full design strength; completion of Barrier IIB; and timely construction of physical barriers to keep Asian carp from bypassing the electric barriers as a result of flooding in the Des Plaines River; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus urges the federal government to designate a single agency, with appropriate regulatory authority and sufficient funding, to oversee and coordinate federal efforts to manage the threat that Asian carp and other invasive species pose to the Great Lakes, their tributaries, and waterways outside the Great Lakes basin that may be threatened; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus urges the states and provinces in the Great Lakes Basin, as well as the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments, to adopt compatible resolutions calling for immediate action to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the appropriate state, provincial, and federal authorities in the United States and Canada including, but not limited to, select leaders and members of Congress the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers, the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.