

Resolution on Asian Carp: Keeping Asian Carp Out of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence represent the largest body of surface fresh water in the world and are a vibrant, diverse ecosystem that is critically important to the economic well-being and quality of life of the Canadian and U.S. populations in the basin;

WHEREAS, over 180 invasive species have entered the ecosystem over the years and caused widespread damage and disruption to the natural balance of the system, as well as significant economic damage;

WHEREAS, one of the most serious threats ever presented by invasive species currently comes from Asian carp, including silver, bighead, and black varieties;

WHEREAS, these varieties of carp were introduced to the southern United States for use in fish farms for algae control in the 1970's and escaped into the Mississippi River system as a result of floods and other means over the years;

WHEREAS, the invasive carp have migrated northward through the Mississippi River system over the years to a point where they are as far north as Wisconsin and Minnesota, and into Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, as well;

WHEREAS, the invasive carp have established dominant populations in many places in the river systems, reducing significantly or eliminating populations of the more desirable species of fish because of their voracious food consumption and prolific reproduction;

WHEREAS, the invasive carp are threatening to enter the Great Lakes at a number of points across the basin, but none appear to present as great a threat as the Illinois River and Chicago Area Waterway System;

WHEREAS, many federal, state, provincial, and local government agencies in the United States and Canada have worked diligently and expended tens of millions of dollars over the past 10 years on a variety of projects to stop the migration of the invasive carp and keep them out of the Great Lakes;

WHEREAS, including the invasive carp, there are 39 invasive species in the two basins that present a threat to cross over into the other basin in the near future;

WHEREAS, once an invasive species establishes itself in an ecosystem, it is exceedingly difficult to eradicate it, and it often inflicts serious damage on the ecosystem and imposes major costs in the form of efforts to control it;

WHEREAS, invasive species have already inflicted hundreds of millions in damage across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and invasive carp pose a serious threat to the \$7 billion sport and commercial fishery that support the economy and help define the culture of the entire region;

WHEREAS, Canadian and U.S. citizens across the basin have expressed serious concern about the invasive carp and other invasive species, and are demanding prompt action;

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and Great Lakes Commission completed a report entitled "Restoring the Natural Divide" on January 31, 2012 that established the feasibility of physical separation of the two basins in the Chicago Area Waterway System that would also maintain or enhance water quality, flood control, and transportation in the System.

WHEREAS, that the invasive carp in the Mississippi River system pose one of the greatest threats to the integrity and well-being of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem, including the 40 million Canadians and Americans who live there;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that preventing the invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem needs to be approached with the greatest sense of urgency by all those responsible for dealing with this matter;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Niagara Region encourages the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and all cooperating U.S. and Canadian agencies to continue operation of the electric barrier, intensive commercial fishing, and other methods to keep the invasive carp out of the Great Lakes while a long term solution is found and implemented.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that additional work should be undertaken to develop more details of the "Restoring the Natural Divide," report;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, once a preferred option is identified, all parties should move forward to implement the solution.