

Dear Governor Pritzker,

As you are aware, invasive Asian Carp are only a few miles away from becoming an unstoppable crisis in the Great Lakes region. But with one stroke of your pen, you can show your commitment to protecting the Great Lakes and help stop these aggressive fish from crashing our regional economy and environment.

We are writing today to urge you to sign the letter of agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would allow them to move forward with Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design for the fortification of Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet, a critical choke-point for invasive Asian Carp about 50 miles downstream of Chicago. The chain of smart technologies in question, including an engineered channel with an acoustic fish deterrent, air bubble curtain and electric barrier, would help prevent the invasive carp from moving from the Mississippi River basin to the Great Lakes basin through the Chicago Area Waterway System.

If invasive Asian Carp break through and enter Lake Michigan, they will forever destroy the environment of the Great Lakes region and our quality of life. By studying ecosystems where these fish have taken root, we know that once they make their home in a body of water, it's already too late. They are voracious filter feeders, capable of eating between 20% and 40% of their body weight in one day. In some parts of the Mississippi River, they make up 70 to 90 percent of the biomass in the river. In many places where invasive Asian Carp live, feed and breed, native fish species can no longer find enough food to grow or survive. We can't allow that to happen to the Great Lakes.

As the largest freshwater ecosystem on earth, the Great Lakes are home to hundreds of fish and wildlife species, from coaster brook trout and coho salmon to blue herons and wood ducks. This wildlife drives a significant and crucial part of the Great Lakes outdoor economy as it supports a \$7 billion fishery, a \$16 billion tourism industry, and over 1.6 million jobs within the basin.

In May 2019, scientists found invasive Asian Carp DNA in Lake Calumet, only 7 miles from Lake Michigan. And in August, researchers from the University of Michigan confirmed what we long feared: invasive Asian Carp will thrive in a large portion of Lake Michigan. The threat to the lakes is clear and the Army Corps' plan is an important step in the right direction in the fight to keep these dangerous fish out of our Great Lakes.

Invasive Asian Carp are a threat to our livelihoods and our way of life, and now is our best chance to stop them. And Illinois residents agree. A 2018 survey showed that 9 in 10 people, both in Illinois and in neighboring states, said it is important to immediately increase protections to block the spread of invasive Asian Carp to the Great Lakes.

By signing the letter of agreement with the Corps, you can bring us one step closer to ensuring that the nightmare scenario of invasive Asian Carp breaching the Great Lakes never becomes a

reality, and send a message to our leaders in Congress that they must act this session to secure full federal funding for the project as part of the FY 2020 appropriations process.

Thank you for your continued attention to this issue and your commitment to protecting our waterways for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

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