

February 25, 2010

To: President Barack Obama
Re: Protecting the Great Lakes sportfishery from Asian Carp

Dear President Obama,

Michigan is a state defined by the Great Lakes geographically, economically, and culturally. With one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water and more freshwater coastline than any other state, the Great Lakes provide Michigan residents with unparalleled recreational and business opportunities that define our outdoor heritage and economic vitality.

Michigan's hunting, fishing, and trapping traditions depend on the diverse ecosystem and habitat of the Great Lakes, its rivers, wetlands, and uplands. With one out of six Michigan residents being a hunter, angler, or both, Michigan's strong outdoor heritage is supported by the diverse recreational opportunities in our natural resources and the Great Lakes. Sportsmen and women in Michigan spend \$3.4 billion each year in our state, providing \$1.7 billion in salaries and wages, yielding an additional \$5.9 billion ripple effect on the state's economy annually.^{i[i]} This provides \$406 million to federal and \$378 million to state and local tax rolls each year. \$2 billion of this spending comes from fishing alone, placing Michigan with the fifth largest expenditures on recreational fishing pursuits out of all fifty states.^{ii[ii]}

While we applaud your unprecedented investment with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and continued funding for Great Lakes restoration, we believe that practical solutions outside the appropriations process are necessary to reduce the threat of Asian Carp to the Great Lakes and its \$7 billion sportfishery. The Draft Asian Carp Control Strategy (Framework) contains many positive actions that will ensure federal support for long-term solutions are in place. However, the short-term solutions contained in the Framework Lake are woefully inadequate and counterintuitive to the entire GLRI and the tax dollars that we support to fund it. We are particularly troubled by the resistance by your administration to impose short-term ecological separation between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system. As experts continue to evaluate long-term preventative Asian Carp measures, ecological separation must be implemented immediately. Further delays will eventually undermine the potential for restoration and vision we share with the GLRI.

As we continue to pressure our Congressional leaders to provide permanent sustainable funding for the GLRI, we respectfully ask you to direct federal agencies to implement immediate ecological separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River systems. Without this necessary short-term measure, Asian Carp will ultimately impede the economic and recreational benefits we strive to achieve through Great Lakes restoration funding due to the proven ecological devastation these fish will bring to the Great Lakes. Further, the Framework must be strengthened to ensure that all reasonable actions are taken to protect the Great Lakes:

- Completion of the Dispersal Barrier Efficacy Study by August with immediate implementation Study's first interim report recommendations as soon as possible;
- Operation of the Dispersal Barrier System at optimal power and frequency
- Expedition of both the completion of Barrier II and upgrade of Barrier I;
- Closure of the sluice gates at the Wilmette Pumping Station and immediate installation of interim barriers in the Grand Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers; and

- A congressional oversight committee should be established to meet with representatives of the responsible state and federal agencies;

- The oversight committee should be given the authority to impose immediate ecological separation if an urgent matter threatens the ecosystem;

- Aggressive monitoring and netting efforts must be expanded to waters near to the Great Lakes Basin;

- Expeditious completion of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Transfer Study

Thank you for your dedication to establish sustainable funding for Great Lakes Restoration. To ensure the work progressed by this investment in our Great Lakes is not lost by the potential devastation of Asian Carp, we respectfully request fulfillment of your pledge to advance a "zero-tolerance policy on invasive species" in response to this crisis by directing appropriate federal agencies to immediately close navigational locks in the Chicago river and canal system under the powers entrusted to you as President of the United States.

Respectfully submitted,

(Almost 5000 people signed the letter at Outdoor Rama in Novi)

cc:

Michigan Members of Congress
Governor Jennifer Granholm
Attorney General Mike Cox
Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor, U.S. EPA
Members of the Michigan Legislature
