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November 2, 2009

Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Room 3E446  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Commission, I am writing to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take emergency action and accelerate efforts to protect the Great Lakes from invasion by Asian carp. The region remains under constant threat that the carp will migrate past or around the electric dispersal barrier system in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC). In September, evidence of Asian carp was found within one mile of the barrier, the last line of defense protecting Lake Michigan. We appreciate the Corps' efforts to date. However, the threat of an invasion by this voracious feeder demands an even greater response and allocation of Corps resources. There are three critical actions the Corps can take to ensure that the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes region is protected.

**1. Take Emergency Action.** Ongoing monitoring by the Corps and the University of Notre Dame indicates that Asian carp have increased their range to within a mile of the dispersal barrier system, as well as into waterways adjacent to the CSSC. Heavy rain or flooding of nearby waterways such as the Des Plaines River could provide a means for the carp to bypass the dispersal barrier system entirely. Immediate emergency action is needed to ensure this does not happen. Also, the State of Illinois is planning to treat the CSSC with chemicals to ensure protection of Lake Michigan when Barrier IIA is taken off-line for maintenance. Several states, provinces and other partners have made contributions toward the costs of this treatment. However, the costs are still in excess of these donations received to date. We urge the Corps to use its authority to free up funding and resources to contribute to emergency actions to prevent Asian carp migration around the dispersal barrier system.

**2. Accelerate Completion of Barrier IIB.** Construction of a permanent dispersal barrier in the CSSC has been ongoing since 2004. In 2007, the Corps received the requested federal authorization and appropriations to complete construction of the barrier system; however, construction of Barrier IIB is still not complete. As a result, the State of Illinois and its partners must prepare for the chemical treatment of the waters around the barrier to ensure continuous protection from Asian carp while Barrier IIA is shut down for maintenance. Repeated chemical treatments are not an economically or ecologically sustainable solution. We urge the Corps to expedite construction on Barrier IIB with the resources appropriated for FY 2010 in order to ensure a fully protective and continuously operating barrier system.

**3. Accelerate the Study of Permanent Solutions.** Congress has also authorized the Corps to conduct a comprehensive investigation of permanent solutions to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Although this authorization occurred in 2007, the region has seen few results and little evidence that this study is being undertaken with the urgency required. Specifically, the study of solutions for the river system in the vicinity of the CSSC should be elevated as the highest priority, before the study considers solutions in other geographic areas. We urge the Corps to make completing investigation of permanent solutions to stop the transfer of aquatic invasive species through the CSSC and nearby waterways a top priority.

The Great Lakes states and many other organizations across the region have provided strong support for the Corps' efforts to protect the lakes from invasion by Asian carp. Securing Congressional support for the dispersal barrier, in particular, has been a top priority for the Commission and many others. I strongly encourage you to take additional actions to protect our valuable commercial and recreational fisheries. Activating the Corps' emergency authority, completing construction of the barrier system and finding permanent solutions to inter-basin transfer of aquatic invasive species are urgent next steps. If you have any questions, or if the Commission can assist the Corps' efforts in any way, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director Tim Eder. We greatly appreciate your leadership in ensuring that the Great Lakes fishery remains as vital to our states' economy in the future as it is today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Pat Quinn  
Chairman

Cc: Major General John Peabody  
Colonel Vincent Quarles