



# Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

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Madison, Wisconsin

February 1, 2007

[Addressee – Great Lakes member of Congress]

Dear [ ]:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Commission, I write to urge Congress to pass the Great Lakes Asian Carp Barrier Act to authorize and complete an electric dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Operation of this barrier system is critical for the protection of the Great Lakes from invasion of Asian carp. This stand alone legislation would authorize the barrier immediately and avoid tying the fate of this important project to the long-delayed Water Resources Development Act. This legislation must be enacted swiftly before it is too late.

The Great Lakes Asian Carp Barrier Act, sponsored by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Rep. Judy Biggert (R-Ill. 13<sup>th</sup>) directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete, at federal expense, an electric barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (Canal) designed to prevent Asian carp and other potential invasive species from migrating upstream into Lake Michigan and the rest of the Great Lakes. Additionally, the legislation, S. 336 and H.R. 553, directs that a smaller, temporary barrier be upgraded to provide an additional measure of protection and provides for the entire system's ongoing operation and maintenance. We also ask Congress to provide appropriations in FY 2007 and 2008 to quickly complete this project.

Asian carp, which can reach more than 100 lbs. in size, were originally imported for algae control in southern fish farms, but escaped into the Mississippi River in the early 1990s during floods. Since then, they have been making their way north and have been found in the Illinois River, which connects to the Great Lakes via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Scientists agree that should these fish escape into the Great Lakes there is a high likelihood that they would upset the Great Lakes food chain and cause catastrophic damage to native species and decimate one of the world's great sport fisheries. Passage of this bill is urgent because this invasive fish is already dangerously close to the Canal and expanding its range. Moreover, the temporary barrier is not consistently delivering the necessary electrical charge and must be upgraded quickly to prevent failure.

The Great Lakes Commission applauds Sen. Durbin and Rep. Biggert for their leadership in promptly bringing this critical legislation before the new Congress. This is truly an example of bipartisan cooperation for the good of our region and our lakes, and I am pleased that Sens. Levin and Stabenow, as well as Democrats and Republicans in Michigan and other Great Lakes states, are cosponsoring the bill. The Commission urges Congress and the President to quickly enact it.

There is wide spread support in the Great Lakes region for immediate legislative action to construct and operate the barrier. The Chicago Ship Canal Asian carp barrier has been


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identified as a top regional priority by the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, a regional entity established under federal legislation (Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) of 1990). The attached letter, submitted by the Great Lakes Panel as a recommendation to the national ANS Task Force (also established under NANPCA), reflects the high level of solidarity on this issue among the diverse Great Lakes Panel membership representing federal, state, tribal, recreational, commercial and non-governmental groups (<http://glc.org/about/taskforce/glpanel.html>).

The Commission thanks you for your leadership on Great Lakes issues. We urge you to join the original co-sponsors of these bills (listed below) in leading the effort to address this most urgent Great Lakes priority. Should you have questions, please contact Tim Eder, executive director, Great Lakes Commission (phone: 734-971-9135; email: [teder@glc.org](mailto:teder@glc.org)).

Sincerely,



John D. Cherry, Jr.  
Michigan Lt. Governor  
Chair

Attachment

**Original Sponsors of HR 553:**

Judy Biggert (R-IL)  
Dave Camp (R-MI)  
John Conyers (D-MI)  
John Dingell (D-MI)  
Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI)  
Luis Gutierrez (D-IL)  
Brian Higgins (D-NY)  
Pete Hoekstra (R-MI)  
Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)  
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Sander Levin (D-MI)  
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Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI)  
Candice Miller (R-MI)  
Thomas Petri (R-WI)  
Thomas M Reynolds (R-NY)  
Mike Rogers (R-MI)  
Louise Slaughter (D-NY)  
Bart Stupak (D-MI)  
Betty Sutton (D-OH)  
Jim Walsh (R-NY)

**Original Sponsors of S. 336:**

Evan Bayh (D-IN)  
Richard Durbin (D-IL)  
Herb Kohl (D-WI)  
Carl Levin (D-MI)  
Richard Lugar (R-IN)  
Barack Obama (D-IL)  
Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)  
George V. Voinovich (R-OH)

