

Adopted March 5, 2014

Preventing the interbasin transfer of Asian carp and other invasive species

Whereas, Asian carp pose an imminent threat to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River ecosystem and economy because of their ability to reproduce rapidly and consume large quantities of food; and

Whereas, if populations of Asian carp become established in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River they will be difficult, if not impossible, to control or eradicate and thus the federal government has recognized Asian carp as “the most acute [aquatic invasive species] threat facing the Great Lakes today”; and

Whereas, extensive monitoring and control efforts including commercial fishing in the Illinois River, led by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and its federal partners, are important interim control measures, while long-term solutions are pursued; and

Whereas, a recent study conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that the electric barriers in the CAWS are not effective in stopping the movement of all fish, especially small fish, and that barges can sweep fish through the electric barrier; and

Whereas, the Army Corps of Engineers has identified 13 aquatic invasive species (AIS) with a high or medium risk of passing through the CAWS into either the Great Lakes or Mississippi River basins that likely would cause harmful impacts on the basin being invaded; and

Whereas, the Army Corps of Engineers has identified 17 other pathways, in addition to the CAWS, through which AIS may be able to pass between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins; and

Whereas, the states of Indiana and Ohio are working with federal partners to close connection points in Eagle Marsh and Ohio waterways; and

Whereas, the State of Wisconsin has permanently closed the Rapide Croche Lock on the Fox River to prevent the passage of aquatic invasive species from Lake Michigan into the Fox River; and

Whereas, the State of Minnesota is actively developing and investing in measures to combat further spread of Asian carp to its inland lakes and rivers, including possible closure of the most upstream Mississippi River lock in Minneapolis; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes governors and premiers of Ontario and Québec have committed to work together to prevent the introduction of new aquatic invasive species, and to develop a mutual aid agreement to facilitate cooperative response actions in the event of detection of new aquatic invasive species that threaten the region; and

Whereas, preventing the spread of Asian carp is a national problem – as evidenced by control efforts also underway in the Ohio River and Upper Mississippi River – and research and control actions in the Great Lakes can support and will be relevant for efforts in other parts of the country; and

Whereas, the *Restoring the Natural Divide* report prepared in 2012 by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative presented three alternatives for separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi

River watersheds in the CAWS to provide a long-term solution that prevents AIS transfer while maintaining or enhancing the system's benefits for flood protection, water quality and waterborne transportation; and

Whereas, the Army Corps of Engineers has released the *Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study* (GLMRIS) presenting a range of eight options to reduce risk of AIS movement between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, including two alternatives for full hydrological separation; and

Whereas, the GLMRIS report recognizes the hydrologic separation options as the most effective at keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, the GLMRIS report does not recommend a preferred alternative and the Corps of Engineers has not provided direction on next steps, emphasizing that "ANS control is a shared responsibility" and "continued participation by stakeholders is essential to reach a decision and authorization for a collaborative path forward"; and

Whereas, the Great Lakes Commission has determined that immediate action is needed to identify short-term steps that can be implemented quickly to reduce risk while continuing to build consensus around a long-term solution.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls for continued action by federal partners to support states in their efforts to further modify waterways and construct barriers to reduce and strive to eliminate the degree of risk from connection points outside of the CAWS; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls for immediate action on a suite of near-term measures to reduce the risk of interbasin transfer of Asian carp and other invasive species at the CAWS, including:

- continued implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework and related efforts;
- immediate implementation of additional control measures as generally outlined in the GLMRIS alternative two (such as use of chemical controls, ballast and bilge management, habitat alternation, and controlled harvesting and overfishing);
- within three years, design, engineer and construct modifications to the Brandon Road lock and dam structure to reduce the risk of one-way transfer (into Lake Michigan), including additional electric barriers at the entrance and exit of the lock, use of fish deterrents, modifications to the gates on the dam, and other technologies;
- design, engineer and test the "GLMRIS lock," as a national demonstration project, to determine its viability and effectiveness at stopping both one- and two-way transfer and cost; and

Be It Further Resolved, while near-term control measures are vital, it is critical that long-term solutions, which may include ecological and/or physical separation, be implemented quickly consistent with the continued movement of Asian carps and other invasive species toward the Great Lakes, and from the Great Lakes toward the Mississippi River basin; and

Be It Further Resolved, that efforts to develop and reach regional consensus within both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins on long-term solutions to prevent interbasin transfer of aquatic invasive species should be accelerated and should include input from the states, the provinces of Ontario and Québec, the full range of affected stakeholders, and that an advisory committee assembled by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative be requested to provide input on solutions in and affecting northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana; and

Be It Further Resolved, that long-term solutions must strive to eliminate risk and prevent the interbasin transfer of all aquatic invasive species while mitigating potential negative impacts on current flood risk management, water quality protection, recreation, and commercial transportation priorities in northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana; and

Be It Further Resolved, that commercial navigation industries are called upon to identify practices to reduce the risk of aquatic invasive species transfer that will be instituted on an escalating pace commensurate with increasing risk of interbasin transfer of Asian carp and other invasive species during their advance toward Lake Michigan; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct a study on the current status, projected trends, and infrastructure and related needs to support the long-term economic viability of commercial transportation on the CAWS, including opportunities for improved multi-modal connectivity, and that this study be conducted in collaboration with other federal agencies, the Great Lakes states, existing users of the CAWS and other interested parties; and

Be It Further Resolved, to complement what is expected to be a substantial commitment of federal resources to address solutions, the Great Lakes states and provinces note that they are currently investing substantial state and provincial resources including development of the new mutual aid agreement, resources for research, prevention and enforcement, surveillance, management and public education programs and, further, that the states and provinces are willing to engage in further dialogue on potential for financing approaches that recognize aquatic invasive species prevention and control as a shared responsibility; and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the Great Lakes Commission calls on the Obama Administration to increase its leadership to resolve the challenge of preventing AIS transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through the Council on Environmental Quality and that the Department of Interior should be delegated the lead role and provided with the resources necessary to coordinate efforts of all other federal agencies.