



NEWS RELEASE

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Regional commissions seek funding for aggressive Asian carp protection

Ann Arbor, Mich. – Protecting the Great Lakes from Asian carp and other aquatic nuisance species is a top priority for regional stakeholders, and the President’s budget should reflect this sense of urgency. This was conveyed this week to President Obama in a joint letter from the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission urging funding for a robust and aggressive program to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp in the FY 2017 federal budget, now being prepared.

The letter emphasized monitoring and control actions being coordinated by the multi-agency Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee and a study being led by the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a plan to deploy control technologies at a key lock on the Illinois River to prevent Asian carp from advancing closer to the Great Lakes.

“It is vital that we sustain and fully fund current Asian carp monitoring and control efforts; develop and implement technologies to impede their expansion; and improve control measures on all potential pathways into the Great Lakes basin,” the letter said.

The two commissions and other regional leaders are urging swift action to test and deploy control measures to stop the upstream movement of Asian carp at the Brandon Road lock and dam, located on the Illinois River in Joliet, Ill., southwest of Chicago. Concerned about the four-year timeframe for completing the Brandon Road study, the letter asked that it “be accelerated to enable us to immediately implement control technologies that will reduce the risk of Asian carp moving toward the Great Lakes while long-term solutions are developed.” Noting that the President requested only \$500,000 for the study in FY 2016, the letter requests that \$3 million be provided annually for the Army Corps of Engineers along with direction to accelerate its research.

Great Lakes Commission Acting Chair Jon Allan, director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, said: “We need a flexible approach that implements promising control technologies quickly while we develop a more complex, long-term solution that fully protects the Great Lakes and Mississippi River and preserves benefits from Chicago-area waterways.” Allan noted recent monitoring showing the upstream movement of young Asian carp in 2014 and emphasized that “acting now is imperative.”

Dr. Bob Hecky, chair of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and professor of biology at the University of Minnesota stated: “The Brandon Road lock presents an immediate opportunity to strengthen protections against Asian carp invading the Great Lakes. It is imperative that we seize this opportunity to safeguard the \$7 billion Great Lakes fishery.”

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*The **Great Lakes Commission**, chaired by Jon W. Allan, director of the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes, is an interstate compact agency established under state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of governors' appointees, state legislators, and agency officials from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at www.glc.org.*

*The **Great Lakes Fishery Commission** is an international organization established by the United States and Canada to promote measures that protect and improve the multi-billion-dollar Great Lakes fishery. The 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, which created the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, was born from a strong need to work together across borders not only to combat sea lampreys but also to promote science and establish working relationships among the players. The commission consists of four Canadian commissioners appointed by the Privy Council and four U.S. commissioners (plus one alternate) appointed by the President. The commissioners are supported by a secretariat located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Learn more at <http://www.glfc.org>.*