



12/13/21

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to support a cost share adjustment in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (WRDA 2022) for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project to stop invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes. The cost share adjustment would change the federal cost share from 80 percent to 100 percent in recognition of the national importance of this project and we hope that you will include this recommended policy change in your WRDA 2022 proposal.

The threat of invasive carp (bighead, silver and black carp) persists in Great Lakes region. Invasive carp were first detected in the Illinois River in the 1990s and have moved steadily closer to Lake Michigan.¹ In June 2017, a live Silver Carp was found just nine miles from Lake Michigan.² In November 2019, numerous eDNA samples from two types of invasive carp were detected just 2½ miles from Lake Michigan in Chicago’s Bubbly Creek.³ The establishment of invasive carp in the Great Lakes would devastate a \$7 billion fisheries industry and would undermine the outdoor recreation economy on which many of our communities depend.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is at the forefront of efforts engaging federal and local partners on critical construction projects in defense of the spread of invasive carp in the Illinois River. In May 2019, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers delivered its Chief’s Report on the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project to Congress and Congress authorized construction of the Brandon Road project in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020.⁴ The recommended plan includes technologies and both structural and non-structural measures to stop the movement of invasive carp toward the Great Lakes. The lock at Brandon Road is a logical choke point to install invasive carp control measures to prevent the fish from moving closer to Lake Michigan. The project is currently in the project engineering and design phase which is anticipated to take approximately four years.

¹Irons, Kevin S., Koel, Todd M., Ratcliff, Eric, “Carp Invasion of the Upper Mississippi River System,” *USGS Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center*, 2000.

https://www.umesc.usgs.gov/reports_publications/psrs/psr_2000_05.html

²“Silver Carp Found Nine Miles from Lake Michigan,” *Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee*, June 29, 2017, <https://www.asiancarp.us/News/silvercarpcapture.html>

³Keith Matheny, “Carp ‘eDNA’ found in Chicago creek near Lake Michigan. But what does it mean?” *Detroit Free Press*, November 25, 2019, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/11/25/asian-carp-edna-found-chicago-bubbly-creek-near-lake-michigan/4230603002/>

⁴ Division AA of Public Law 116-260, Water Resources Development Act of 2020, Section 402.

Although the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project is located in Illinois, it would protect all eight Great Lakes states from the spread of invasive carp. It would also allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to test technologies that could be deployed in other parts of the country to prevent the movement of aquatic invasive species. Because this project benefits multiple states and has technologies that could be deployed elsewhere in the country, we believe that the project should be funded fully by the federal government. Furthermore, changing the cost share to 100 percent federal will ensure that construction begins as soon as possible after the project, engineering and design work is complete.

There is precedent for this because the federal government funded 100% of the construction of the electric barriers at Romeoville, Illinois. This project is a series of electric barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal operated by USACE. These barriers are currently the last line of defense against invasive carp entering the Chicago Area Waterways System and then Lake Michigan.

For the reasons set forth above, we respectfully request that you include 100% federal funding for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project in your submission of WRDA 2022 projects to the Environment and Public Works Committee. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Don Jodrey at djodrey@greatlakes.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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