

House Testimony on Asian Carp
December 10, 2009
Jim Dexter, MDNR Fisheries Division

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide you with a brief update on the activities the Department of Natural Resources has been involved with in relation to the Asian Carp activities in Illinois last week. Our staffs have been intimately involved with Asian carp management issues for well over a decade.

Six professional fisheries technicians spent 6 days last week in Illinois assisting in a large effort to chemically poison 5.7 miles of the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal in an effort to remove any Asian carp. Our technician staffs were supplied from the Plainwell office (near Kalamazoo) and the Waterford office in the Detroit area, and did a fabulous job in contributing to the overall effort. In addition to the technical support staff sent to the area, Michigan contributed nearly its entire inventory of rotenone, the chemical used to kill the fish, and Potassium permanganate, another chemical used to neutralize the rotenone.

Work was conducted 24 hours per day by staff supplied from all 8 Great Lakes states, Canada, and several agencies of the Federal Government. The chemical treatment removed approximately 50,000 pounds of fish that included one bighead Asian carp that was found just above the Lockport Lock and dam, which was near the end of the treated segment of canal.

eDNA sampling, a newly developed technique that analyses water samples for minute samples of DNA, had shown recently that Asian Carp were in the electrical barrier area that is designed to repel fish and keep them downstream. Subsequent and more recent eDNA sampling has revealed that Asian carp may be even further upstream, into other branches and areas of the Chicago waterway system. Because of these recent findings, additional surveying has been occurring and will continue to be conducted in these areas to better determine where Asian carp are present.

Are we concerned about this? You bet. And so is every other natural resource management agency that has been involved with this issue. There has been a tremendous amount of press on this issue in recent weeks, and for good reason. I have been asked more times than I can remember what is going to happen to the Great Lakes? This is about more than the Great Lakes, its also about our river systems, and drowned river mouth lakes, and any other water that has a connection to the Great Lakes, and ultimately our inland waters. Just look at zebra mussels for example, another well known invader. They started in the Great Lakes, and in the last 20 years have invaded any number of inland waters.

Will Asian carp destroy the Great Lakes? That depends on how quickly and effectively those who control these waterways act to keep them out of the Great Lakes. Some number of these fish would have to get there first, not just one or two. But if we look to the sad experience of what has happened in the Mississippi River basin since these fish

escaped from aquaculture facilities in the early 1990's, it has been devastating for recreational fishing and boating, and commercial fishing. Yes Asian carp possess the ability to cause tremendous destruction and disruption of our ecosystems. We only have one chance to keep these fish out. If they do get in and become established, there will likely be no looking back and we will have to live with the consequences.

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-218 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Mica
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

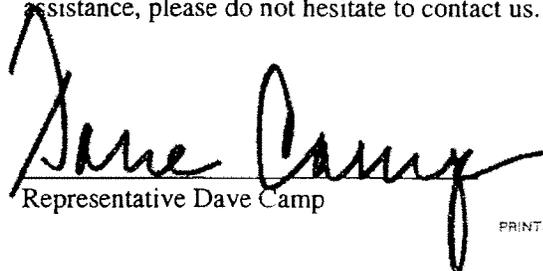
Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Oberstar, Ranking Member Mica:

We write today to express our extreme concerns about the spread of invasive Asian carp from the Mississippi River into the Great Lakes and respectfully request emergency funding of \$30 million for the Army Corps of Engineers and related agencies to address this matter. As you are certainly aware, the Rotenone piscicide application last week has proven that Asian carp have indeed reached the preventative barriers. We believe the discovery of non-native invasive carp south of the preventative barrier, yet only 25 miles from Great Lakes access points, calls for immediate emergency action. If introduced to the Great Lakes, the economic, ecological and recreational damage these fish would create would be devastating to the world's largest source of freshwater, and would be far more expensive than the \$30 million estimated cost to stopping this invasion.

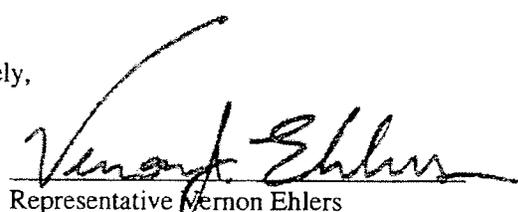
It is our understanding that there will be consideration of an Omnibus spending bill as early as this week, in which we urge this emergency funding to be included. The two primary agencies responsible for the control of these invasive species, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, have both stated that one of their largest obstacles to addressing this matter, and to speed up the process of developing a permanent solution, is a lack of funding. As such, we encourage the Chairmen and Ranking Members to make accessible \$30 million to the Corps, the EPA, and all other agencies responsible for the control of these invasive species, to combat and prevent the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. This funding will be used to implement the Efficacy Study Interim Report Bypass Solutions, provide for further piscicide procurement and application, expand the eDNA validation process, continue work on an interbasin study, and other emergency actions as determined by the Corps.

Additionally, it is also our understanding that the Corps has requested additional authority to act in an emergency capacity in response to the outcome of their ongoing research and eDNA samplings. While the 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations bill grants the Corps the authority to take emergency measures to prevent aquatic nuisance species from dispersing into the Great Lakes until October 28, 2010, we strongly believe this time period should be extended and authority expanded until the Corps feasibility study on the spread of Asian carp, and the subsequent implementation of the recommended actions of the study are completed. We desperately need a permanent solution to the Asian carp immediately.

We appreciate your consideration of this extremely important matter. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.


Representative Dave Camp

Sincerely,

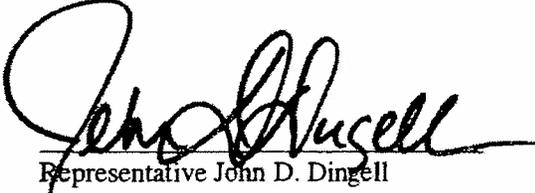

Representative Vernon Ehlers



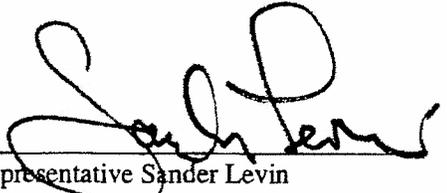
Senator Carl Levin



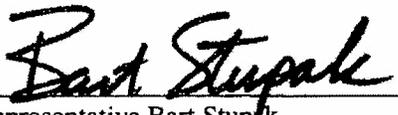
Representative Dale Kildee



Representative John D. Dingell



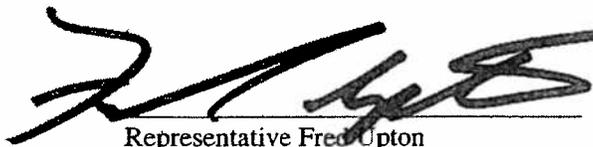
Representative Sander Levin



Representative Bart Stupak



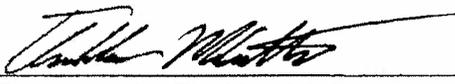
Representative Mike Rogers (M2)



Representative Fred Upton



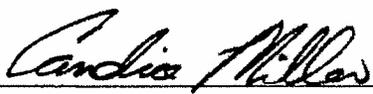
Representative Pete Hoekstra



Representative Thaddeus McCotter



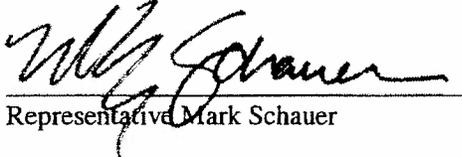
Senator Debbie Stabenow



Representative Candice Miller



Representative Gary Peters



Representative Mark Schauer