



For Immediate Release
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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION COMMENDS REP. CANDICE MILLER FOR NEW LEGISLATION AIMED AT STOPPING ASIAN CARP AND OTHER HARMFUL SPECIES

ANN ARBOR, MI— The Great Lakes Fishery Commission today commended US Representative Candice Miller for introducing new legislation (“Defending Against Aquatic Invasive Species Act”) to prevent the movement of harmful invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). The bill directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, the governors, the Great Lakes Commission, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and other key institutions in the Great Lakes basin to draw up the engineering plan needed to re-separate the naturally divided watersheds. The legislation is also notable for the strict deadlines it sets to develop the plan and begin implementation.

Last month, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its much anticipated “Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study” (GLMRIS), which outlined a range of options available to prevent the movement of species between the two basins. In 2012, the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative produced a plan (“Restoring the Natural Divide”) which also contained options. Although the current effort is motivated by a looming Asian carp invasion, the GLMRIS report pointedly noted that many other species threaten the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The Great Lakes, said GLMRIS, is potentially the source of at least 22 harmful species that could invade the Mississippi River and the Mississippi River is the potential source of at least 10 species (including three species of Asian carp) that could invade the Great Lakes. Clearly, intervention needs to occur in the CAWS, and with GLMRIS, “Restoring the Natural Divide,” and other ideas from key authorities like the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, the tools are now available to develop a specific plan to do so.

“While presenting several ideas for preventing the movement of species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, GLMRIS did not include a recommended option nor did it present a detailed design for implementation,” said Robert Lambe, executive secretary of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. “As such, policy-makers in the Great Lakes region have called for an immediate effort to agree upon and fund a specific project to address the invasive species threat.”

“Candice Miller’s legislation is the important ‘next step’ needed to keep this long-term, difficult process moving forward,” Lambe continued. “Her legislation does three important things. First, it calls for the development of a specific engineering design that can be implemented. Second, it directs the corps to develop this project in cooperation with key partners in the region—partners who have authority to manage water in the CAWS and who have excellent ideas for how to prevent the movement of invasive species. Finally, it sets clear deadlines for implementation, so we do not go on studying this problem indefinitely.”

Lambe concluded: “The Great Lakes need protection from harmful invasive species like Asian carp and snakehead. Several studies have concluded that the CAWS leaves the Great Lakes and Mississippi basins at significant risk from the movement of aquatic invaders. The CAWS pathway must be addressed for the protection of the \$7 billion fishery, the ecology of the region, and the millions of people who depend on the lakes for livelihoods, recreation, transportation, drinking water, and myriad other uses. I commend Ms. Miller and her colleagues for their sustained interest in developing immediate and effective solutions to stop the invasive species that cost billions of dollars in damage to the US and Canada.”

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The commission has the responsibility to promote measures that protect and improve the multi-billion-dollar Great Lakes fishery.

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