

March 2, 2020

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
2362-B RHOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
1016 LHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson:

On behalf of the below hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation organizations representing over hundreds of thousands of people in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins, we are writing to express our strong support for continuing critical funding to combat the urgent threat of Asian carp on our fishery, outdoor recreational economy and way of life. While efforts to control Asian carp have specific regional control strategies, this is a national crisis that demands a coordinated national response. Specifically, we request that the FY2021 budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) are funded appropriately to help prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes and reduce the threat of Asian carp spreading throughout these important watersheds. To that end, we hope Congress will agree to the following critical requests:

- Provide at least \$5 million in FY2021 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue pre-construction engineering and design of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam plan to help keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes;
- Provide at least \$500,000 in FY2021 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to initiate the scoping phase for a feasibility study to prevent two-way transfer of aquatic nuisance species to continue progress on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Inter-Basin Study;
- Provide at least \$300 million in FY2021 for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that will help Asian carp control actions;
- Provide at least \$47 million in FY2021 for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to continue critical work on fisheries management and prevent invasive grass carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes;
- Provide at least \$25 million in FY 2021 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund the Great Lake's Asian Carp Action Plan and to undertake control actions to stop the spread of Asian carp throughout the Mississippi River and its tributaries, including the Upper Mississippi River, Ohio River, Tennessee-Cumberland River, Lower Mississippi River, Arkansas-Red-White River, and Missouri River basins;
- Provide at least \$4.4 million in FY2021 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund implementation of State Aquatic Nuisance Species management plans required by the National Invasive Species Act (NISA); and
- Provide at least \$11 million in FY2021 to the U.S. Geological Survey to fund further research into early detection practices and control technologies aimed at stopping the further spread of Asian carp.

Great Lakes:

Invasive Asian carp are getting closer to Lake Michigan and the rest of the Great Lakes. Asian carp larvae have been detected less than 50 miles from Chicago. Silver carp were found just 9 miles from Lake Michigan in 2017. The establishment of Asian carp in the Great Lakes will devastate a \$7 billion fishery. It would change river systems throughout the basin, undermining the outdoor recreation economy linked to them. This is an urgent crisis that requires an urgent response.

In addition, grass carp are continuing to pose a distinct threat to the Great Lakes, with Lake Erie being the current area of focus. Continued funding for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is critically needed to support coordination and collaboration amongst state management agencies and with the federal government. As such, we request that the Commission's budget be at least \$47 million so that it can continue its critical fisheries management and invasive species work, and support the coordinated efforts among states management agencies and with the federal government.

Ohio-Upper Mississippi River:

Asian carp are currently posing serious adverse impacts to native fish species, threaten recreational fisheries valued at \$19 billion, and are causing public safety concerns throughout the Mississippi River Basin, including the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River Basin. State Department of Natural Resources agencies along the main stem Ohio River (Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois), in partnership with other Ohio River basin states, the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA), the USFWS and other federal agency partners, led the development of an Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework for the Ohio River Basin. Similarly, Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks have been developed for the Upper Mississippi River Basin, Lower Mississippi River Basin, and Missouri River Basin. In order for these Frameworks to be successful, continued resources are needed to allow increased collaboration and field work to develop and implement effective actions necessary to stop the spread of Asian carp. In addition, we strongly support efforts to continue Asian carp control actions outlined in each state's Aquatic Nuisance Species plan throughout the Mississippi River. Specifically, sustained funding is needed to: 1) contain expansion of Asian carp in the Mississippi River and its sub-basins, while minimizing impacts to native species movement; 2) continue comprehensive monitoring; 3) evaluate and implement deterrent measures at strategic pinch points to prevent dispersal of Asian carp; 4) remove Asian carp from the Mississippi River and its sub-basins, using efficient and diverse methods including commercial harvest; and 5) support research to improve existing and develop new control technologies.

Kentucky-Barkley Reservoirs-Tennessee and Cumberland River:

Asian carp have moved aggressively into Kentucky and the Tennessee and Cumberland River basins causing major damage to our native fisheries and rural economies. Fisheries professionals from Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi have worked together to develop a control strategy for Asian carp in the Tennessee and Cumberland River basins that will: 1) support the purchase and installation of barriers to prevent movement of Asian carp; 2) provide financial and other incentives for commercial fisherman to remove carp that are infesting waters in impacted reservoirs through state block grants; and 3) fund monitoring of Asian carp to evaluate management actions and ensure that barrier and removal methods being use are successful.

Conclusion:

This Congress has provided great leadership in advancing initiatives to stop the spread of Asian carp. We believe that requesting this critical funding in FY 2021 for the USFWS, USACE, USGS, and GLFC to continue to implement a national coordinated strategy to advance Asian carp control actions is critical to preventing the further spread of Asian carp and other invasive species and is consistent with our collective commitment to protecting the health and sustainability of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins.

Sincerely,

Ward G. Wilson
Executive Director
Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Joe Wilkinson
President
Iowa Wildlife Federation

Lance Ness
President
Minnesota Conservation Federation

Marc Smith
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National Wildlife Federation

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