

US and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission
A Resolution in support of Ecological Separation
of the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins

Whereas four invasive Asian carp species, the bighead (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), silver (*H. molitrix*), grass (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), and black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), are established in the Mississippi River basin and pose an imminent threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem, fisheries, and economy; and

Whereas a bighead carp was retrieved below the electric dispersal barrier, 500 feet north of the Lockport Lock and Generating Station in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and carp DNA has been detected in water samples from Calumet Harbor of Lake Michigan; and

Whereas if populations of Asian carp become established in the Great Lakes, and in other locations in the Great Lakes region, they will be impossible to eradicate with current technology; and

Whereas the Mississippi River basin and the Great Lakes basin are physically connected by a system of man-made canals and waterways in the Chicago area, called the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS); and

Whereas the CAWS creates a two-way pathway between the Great Lakes – currently the site of 186 known aquatic invasive species – and Mississippi basins, between which aquatic invasive species have and will continue to invade each other until 100% ecological separation has been achieved; and

Whereas a wide range of organizations, including the Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin chapters of the American Fisheries Society, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence Cities Initiative, the Great Lakes Commission, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority, and several others have, in one way or another, endorsed the concept of “ecological separation”; and

Whereas the United States Geologic Survey, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, have all conducted risk assessment studies on Asian carp species and share the goals to prevent an invasion of the Great Lakes by Asian carp species; and

Whereas ecological separation is defined as no inter-basin transfer of aquatic organisms via the Chicago Area Waterway System at any time, and the prohibition of movement or inter-basin transfer of aquatic organisms between the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins; and

Whereas preliminary research funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission indicates that separation of the two watersheds is feasible; now

Therefore be it resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission support the immediate ecological separation of the Mississippi River basin from the Great Lakes basin; and

The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from First Nation, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are nominated by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission call for congress, the administration, and the states to urgently complete all necessary studies to support and develop a plan for ecological separation and begin implementation immediately thereafter; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission call for the acceleration and support of programs to prevent further introductions utilizing science, technology, and research based management that will prevent the transfer and movement of invasive species into the Great Lakes basin; and

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission call upon the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to adopt this resolution as their own position, and carry these recommendations to all appropriate parties; and

Therefore be it finally resolved the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission express their extreme frustration that aquatic invasive species continue to menace the Great Lakes ecosystem after decades of experience with the ecological, social, and economic devastation to the Great Lakes region by exotic species such as sea lamprey, zebra mussels, and the more than 180 other species that have invaded and continue to invade the Great Lakes as a result of legislative and regulatory inaction, and call for immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration to address all major invasive species pathways.

Passed unanimously with one abstention, *March 25, 2010*

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