

New Bill on Asian Carp Control introduced in Congress

Would require Corps of Engineers to accelerate study/findings on hydrological separation

Senators Stabenow (D-MI) and Durbin (D-IL), and Congressman Dave Camp (R-MI), on June 30 introduced a bill in the U.S. House and Senate that would greatly accelerate the move toward separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, something we ALL want.

The bill—called the "Permanent Prevention of Asian Carp Act of 2010" - requires the U.S. Army Corps to accelerate a study that determines the feasibility AND the best means of achieving hydrological separation. The companion bills, introduced in both U.S. Chambers, have the same name - "Permanent Prevention of Asian Carp Act of 2010". Neither bill has yet been assigned a number.

We in the conservation community need to stimulate all members of Congress with strong bi-partisan support and a sense of urgency to pass these bills and get them to President Obama's desk ASAP. Contact your members of Congress, and urge them to expedite passage of these bills. Go to: <http://www.contactingthecongress.org/>

There are two main differences between this bill and the corps' existing authority. First, this bill significantly narrows the scope of the corps' work—it focuses on Chicago and it says "tell us how to separate" instead of directing the corps to study the full gamut of options throughout the region. Second, it establishes some tight deadlines—an initial report is due in six months with the final report due in a year and a half. Also, the Council on Environmental Quality (the White House), under this bill, would play a role in oversight.

The legislation is consistent with public statements made by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Great Lakes Commission, Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council and other conservation groups: that separation is the only viable end point and that it should be done with all haste.

The bills would require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the feasibility and the best means of achieving hydrological separation of the two watersheds. Hydrological separation is essential in blocking the movement of Asian carp and other invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins via a waterway system in the Chicago area.

"The bill introduced last week, if passed, would set into motion a process that we at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission have long supported—a process to permanently separate the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins," said Commissioner Michael Hansen, a professor at the U. of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. "This bill directs the corps to tell us how to achieve separation. The bill also establishes some tight deadlines: an initial report is due in six months with the final report due in a year and a half."

Hansen added: "Asian carp and other invasive species should not be allowed to enter the Great Lakes, harm the ecosystem, and threaten the \$7 billion fishery. The only true solution to the invasive species corridor that is the Chicago Waterway System is to separate the two watersheds. This bill provides a path to achieving that goal sooner rather than later".

In the Senate, the legislation is also cosponsored by Carl Levin (D-MI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Al Franken (D-MN), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Roland Burris (D-IL). In the House, the legislation is cosponsored by Michigan Representatives John Dingell, Vern Ehlers, Pete Hoekstra, Dale Kildee, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Sandy Levin, Thaddeus McCotter, Candice Miller, Gary Peters, Mike Rogers, Mark Schauer, Bart Stupak, and Fred Upton.

"Last week's discovery of an Asian Carp in Lake Calumet was a wake-up call that we need to do more and we need to do it quickly," said Senator Dick Durbin. "We can't wait while the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies broadly examine methods of controlling invasive species; we must act now. Our bill creates an expedited study of the feasibility of separating the waterways

The study must begin within 30 days of the bill's enactment, and the Army Corps must send a progress report to Congress and the President within six months and again in 12 months. The full study must be completed and given to Congress and the President 18 months after the bill is enacted. It will be monitored by the Council on Environmental Quality to ensure its thorough and timely completion.

The study will also address flooding threats, Chicago wastewater, water safety operations, and barge and recreational vessel traffic alternatives. It will examine other modes of transportation for the shipping industry and influence new engineering designs to move canal traffic from one body of water to the other without transferring invasive species.

Other Breaking News Items:

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[Southland firms blast Asian carp legislation](#)

Businesses that depend on the waterways connecting Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River on Wednesday lambasted a push by Midwestern lawmakers to look at permanently separating them to avoid the invasion of Asian carp.

[Too late to stop the Asian carp invasion?](#)

Even as lawmakers proposed new legislation designed to stop Asian carp from spreading into the Great Lakes, environmentalists fret that the battle is close to being lost

[Regional news: Carp on move in Wabash River](#)

Members of Congress were briefed on JUN 30 by officials in Indiana on a finding that Asian carp have been moving upstream in the Wabash River in Indiana. Flooding could send the fish into the nearby Maumee River in Ohio, which leads into Lake Erie.

[Great Lakes lawmakers act to stop Asian carp](#)

Legislation introduced June 30 by Great Lakes lawmakers seeks to do what federal agencies have been unwilling to do so far in the battle against the invasive Asian carp -- create a permanent barrier between the waters where the fish is present and Lake Michigan.

[Obama asked to lead fight against Asian carp](#)

With word leaking that bighead carp may be advancing toward Lake Erie, a coalition of environmental organizations is asking President Barack Obama to take control of the Asian carp fight.

[Ehlers, Hoekstra urge Obama to protect Great Lakes from Asian carp](#)

Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids and Hoekstra, R-Holland, urged President Barack Obama to take swift action to protect the Great Lakes from the threat of Asian carp in a letter along with a bipartisan group of 14 senators and 32 representatives.

[Key factor in Asian carp battle: Can they survive in rivers?](#)

Don't panic, but do plan wisely for the worst. That's the view of the Asian carp menace held by Alan Steinman, director of Grand Valley State University's Annis Water Resources Institute in Muskegon.

[Milwaukee River PCB cleanup delayed](#)

A long-anticipated cleanup of PCBs in the Milwaukee River has been pushed back to next year. Officials had originally hoped to begin work this year but are still determining how, exactly, to remove about two tons of the hazardous industrial waste from about 100,000 cubic ft of sediment.

[St. Lawrence River sinking to new levels](#)

Canadian and United States officials have agreed to release more water from Lake Ontario through the dam in Cornwall. Hundreds of thousands of cubic feet per second is already being drawn from Lake Ontario and the flow through the Cornwall dam could be more than doubled by

[Funds ok'd to build two lake research vessels](#)

Congress has agreed to fund construction of two large Great Lakes research vessels for the U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center at a combined cost of \$8.2 million, one of which is to be permanently stationed at the Lake Erie Biological Station the USGS operates here.

[Asian Carp forces troubleshooters to dream big](#)

As concerns mount about Asian carp, momentum is building to re-engineer Chicago's waterways to allow for the passage of boats and ships, but not harmful invasive species. Calling it a Burnham Plan for the new millennium, lawmakers and environmental leaders from around the Great Lakes are talking about what the proposed water system might look like, how it could function, and what it would cost.

[Kohl, Feinberg ask for Obama's help in Asian Carp battle](#)

Federal agents committed to protecting Lake Michigan from an Asian carp invasion have been saying for months they would not be 100% convinced they have an imminent problem until they actually found a carp above the electric barrier. Well, now they've got a problem - and the attention of the region's most powerful politicians.

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