



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

101 S. Webster St.
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921
Telephone 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TTY Access via relay - 711

Testimony by Matt Frank, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Before the

U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee

On Water Resources and Environment

February 9, 2010

Introduction

Chairwoman Johnson and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our shared efforts aimed at protecting the Great Lakes from aquatic invasive species – in this case Asian Carp. My name is Matt Frank and I am the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I am pleased to submit this testimony on behalf of the WDNR and my boss, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle.

I want to start by thanking Representative Oberstar for his leadership on many Great Lakes issues as Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I also want to applaud Representative Kagen for his leadership as a member of this Subcommittee and I would also like to recognize Representative Petri who serves on the full Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.

The Great Lakes in Perspective

The Great Lakes are a treasure of international significance. They contain approximately 20% of the world's surface freshwater, and 95% of North America's. One in three Canadians and one in 10 U.S. residents depend on the Great Lakes for their water. More than 35 million U.S. residents and 8 million Canadians live, work, and recreate in, on or by the waters of the Great Lakes Basin.

The Great Lakes regional economy and, indeed, our nation's depend on the Great Lakes. For example, the Great Lakes provide water for 70 percent of U.S. steel production. The Lakes provide transportation for almost 200 million tons of international and interlake cargo—indeed, the lake carriers can tell you how much transport tonnage they lose for each inch of water lost. One-third of all the boats registered in the United States are in the Great Lakes States and boating alone supports over 250,000 jobs. Overall, our

region generates nearly 30% of our nation's gross domestic product and about 60% of all U.S. manufacturing. Water is also used for hydro-power on both sides of the border. All of these different uses depend on the lakes in different ways as a source for clean, abundant fresh water.

Wisconsin boasts a \$13 billion tourism industry, much of those dollars are generated thanks to abundant, healthy water resources and in turn a popular recreational fishery.

Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior support a popular and thriving sport fishery which includes private anglers, licensed guides and charter captains. There are approximately 235,000 anglers who fish 3.7 million days each year primarily for rainbow, brown and lake trout, chinook and coho salmon, walleye, smallmouth bass, strain muskellunge, and yellow perch. Wisconsin licensed 359 charter captains in 2009. Based on Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) creel surveys of major fisheries in 2008 (not all fisheries are covered), anglers harvested a minimum of 640,000 fish in Lake Michigan and 36,000 fish in Lake Superior.

Sport fishing in Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior generated \$419 million in economic activity and supported 5,000 jobs in Wisconsin alone, based on a comprehensive survey conducted in 2006 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Census and an economic analysis done by the American Sportfishing Association.

Sustainable management and use of the Great Lakes can foster economic growth while protecting our environment. Conversely, we place our water resources, our environment and our economy at risk if we do not manage the Lakes sustainably and do not keep our lakes at healthy levels. Therefore, we must be forward-looking to put in place effective policies that address today's issues and anticipate tomorrow's challenges. These policies should include immediately and effectively tackling our most pressing problems; putting in place an effective long-term water management framework; and, developing a robust research and information-sharing regime to encourage adaptive management.

Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is a persistent challenge requiring myriad and collaborative actions across all levels of government. Required actions are not easily isolated from one another, nor should they be, and we must look at all of the challenges that face our Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy
Highlights the Challenge of Aquatic Invasive Species

When I testified at your field hearing in Green Bay in the spring of 2008, I noted with pride the collective achievement of Great Lakes region in producing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Strategy to achieve our shared goals. The framework for the GLRC was based on the nine priorities that the Great Lakes Governors outlined in 2003. The process started with a Presidential Executive Order and included our regional leaders—Governors, Mayors, Members of Congress and Tribal leaders—as well as non-governmental groups and hundreds of committed citizens. The process united us as never before toward our shared goals of protecting and restoring our nation’s water belt—the Great Lakes. And, it provided a shared vision of near-term steps that could put us on a path toward a restored water belt—a healthy water belt to power our nation’s economy and support a robust environment.

That promise is now being brought to reality thanks to the hard work of those same Great Lakes stakeholders and the welcome federal commitment of significant resources to support the strategy through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. As you know, this Initiative was funded by this Congress at the full \$475 million requested by President Obama for Federal Fiscal Year 2010.

Aquatic Invasive Species Control Key Strategy

While we are extremely grateful to Congress and to the Administration for your support of the GLRI, it is noteworthy that over \$60 million of the \$475 million for the Initiative is being expended just to combat aquatic invasive species. Indeed, aquatic invasive species (AIS) continue to pose one of the most serious threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem. An average of one new species is discovered in the Great Lakes ecosystem every eight months, and once present, eradication is often impossible. Prevention is vital to stemming ecosystem impacts from new invasive species. And, because AIS easily transfer from watershed to watershed, it is absolutely critical that comprehensive national action be taken to combat the spread of AIS.

Chicago Ship Canal Just One Vector for Invasives

Yesterday’s White House Asian Carp Summit was a very important step in our collective efforts to keep

Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes. Your support of additional federal revenue for this task would also be very appreciated. For several weeks now, we have been raising several issues where swift action is needed. Some of the key issues where we continue to focus our attention and urge concrete action include:

Achieving a total “ecological separation” of the Mississippi-Illinois River System from the Great Lakes drainage.

Background: Like Michigan, Wisconsin is gravely concerned about Asian Carp and other AIS movement into Lake Michigan, but unlike Michigan we also have to live with AIS movement downstream into the Mississippi River system. The current electrical barrier provides no protection against downstream movement, so “ecological separation” is the only effective option for Wisconsin. In Chicago, this means infrastructure changes in the **Chicago Waterway System (CWS)** such that there are no direct hydrologic connections between the Illinois Sanitary and Ship Canal and Lake Michigan.

To ensure that Asian Carp do not become established in Lake Michigan before “ecological separation” is completed, we also want swift action in these areas:

Operate the existing Electrical Dispersal Barrier system at maximum effective power and expedite completion of the proposed Barrier IIB.

Background Congress first directed the COE to deal with the problem of invasive species movement in the CWS in 1996 and they have slowly been developing a system of 3 electrical barriers at a bottleneck location on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (see attached diagram). The first was a low power “demonstration” barrier (Barrier I) which did not begin operation until 2002. After lengthy wrangling over funding, a second, more powerful dual barrier has been incrementally constructed. Testing began on the first barrier of the new dual system (Barrier IIA) in March 2006 and finally began full time operation in April 2009. Due to safety concerns it is still not being operated at a voltage that is sufficient to repel all sizes of Asian Carp. COE has stated that it has received funding for the second barrier of the new dual system (Barrier IIB) and that construction is underway and will be completed by September, 2010. COE states that operational and safety testing must be completed before Barrier IIB can start operation and provides no timetable for completion of the tests. In the years since Congress first instructed the COE to deal with this issue, progress has been slow. In 2004, despite the fact that this interstate waterway is the responsibility of the Federal government, the eight Great Lakes states contributed \$575,000 needed to fill a gap in funding to construct the barrier (Wisconsin contributed \$68,000 from WNDR).

