STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

November 13, 2009

Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

I write to you today on a serious matter that is critical to the health of the Great Lakes. Recent information released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicates that Asian Carp are very close to the partially operational and incomplete electrical barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal. To avoid the devastating effects of these invasive species in reaching the Great Lakes, specific investments and actions are essential to ensure that the barrier and other infrastructure are controlling the water pathways used by aquatic invasive species. Below I have listed specific actions that need to be continued or initiated.

First, electrical barrier 2B needs to be completed and operational as soon as possible. The design for the electrical barrier in the canal consists of two parts, 2A and 2B. Of the two parts, to date only barrier 2A is operational, leading to serious problems with turning it off for maintenance. Barrier 2B is needed both for full protection from carp dispersal and to provide for maintenance of the electrical barrier as required. As an interim measure, Michigan has supported an emergency response plan to protect the Great Lakes during a period when the existing barrier may be deactivated for maintenance, however, these emergency response efforts falls short of the long-term solution needed. Michigan was pleased to see funding to continue operation of portions of the electrical barrier in the canal and to continue construction of permanent barriers in the fiscal year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations Act. This work must proceed expeditiously.

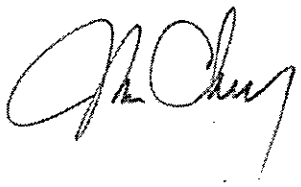
Second, safety studies must be quickly completed and procedures put in place to allow for full power operation of barrier 2A. To date, the barrier is operating at only half of its potential due to incomplete safety studies on its operation. Present operations may be enough power to deter adult Asian Carp from passing through the barrier but may not be enough to deter small fish.

Third, a physical barrier, even if temporary, needs to be constructed as soon as possible between the Des Plaines River and the canal to eliminate the potential for flooding between the two waterways. Flooding could allow movement of fish, including Asian Carp, into the canal and vice versa. If the one-year period of authority for this action provided in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act is insufficient, or if additional appropriations are needed to implement timely actions, I urge you to advise our Congressional delegation immediately so that they can continue to support protection of the Great Lakes from Asian Carp. I note it is important to the overall effort in the area of the canal that funding for physically separating the Des Plaines River and the canal not be re-programmed from the critical work on the electrical barrier itself.

Invasive species, such as Zebra Mussels, Round Goby and Eurasian Ruffe, have already demonstrated devastating environmental and economic effects on both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds. Further work on a permanent solution to prevent the dispersal of aquatic invasive species needs to proceed in a timely manner. Michigan was pleased to see funding to continue a study, including consultations with key partners on the range of options and technologies to prevent the inter-basin transfer of aquatic invasive species in the fiscal year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. This is important work for protection much of the U.S. from invasive species dispersal and I would urge you to make the review of issues related to the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal a top priority.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter. Please let me know if there is anything more the state of Michigan can do to help with this critical work.

Respectfully,



John D. Cherry, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor