

June 20, 2024

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We write to express our concern about the threat posed by invasive carp to the environmental and economic health of Lake Michigan and the State of Illinois, as well as to the entire Great Lakes ecosystem. We are concerned that current delays in finalizing the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, specifically the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA), could allow invasive carp to swim closer to, and invade, Lake Michigan, outcompete native fish and negatively affect the productivity of our commercial and recreational fisheries, tourism, use and enjoyment of our lakes and rivers, as well as human safety. Specifically, we ask that you sign the PPA by June 30th.

Because the threat of invasive carp becoming established in Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes is so great and the environmental and economic effects so severe, Congress authorized the Brandon Road Interbasin Project in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 as the most feasible way to prevent the upstream migration of invasive carp into Lake Michigan. With more than a decade in development and planning and with significant stakeholder involvement, the project is currently estimated to cost \$1.1 billion, cost shared at 90 percent federal and 10 percent non-federal. Congress has provided a total of \$274 million in construction funding and the States of Illinois and Michigan have allocated \$50 million and \$65 million, respectively, for the project which covers the entire 10 percent non-federal share. Furthermore, Congress is presently considering legislation as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 that would increase the federal share of the project's long-term operations and maintenance to 90%.

Clearly, much has been accomplished these last several years. Congressional and federal support for the project is strong. Other Great Lakes states, local governments and business and environmental stakeholders support the project. We appreciate your leadership and support that has gotten us to this point. The only remaining action that is required is for the State of Illinois to sign the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the Army Corps of Engineers. We understand that negotiations over the PPA have been going on for many months and we understand from the Assistant Secretary of the Army that the PPA must be agreed to by the end of June 2024 so that the project can take advantage of certain planned lock closures in the river and move forward to construction later this year. If this construction window is not met, costs could increase.

Preventing invasive carp from invading Lake Michigan is an urgent priority. Accordingly, we write to request your assistance to ensure that the PPA is completed promptly so that project construction is not delayed. We look forward to working with you to ensure that invasive carp do not spread into Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes.

Sincerely,

National Wildlife Federation
Ducks Unlimited
Trout Unlimited
National Parks Conservation Association
League of Conservation Voters
Sierra Club
American Rivers
Izaak Walton League of America
Alliance for the Great Lakes
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Illinois Environmental Council
Save Lake Superior Association
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes
Save the Dunes
Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
Western New York Environmental Alliance
Lee Wulff Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Shaker Lakes Garden Club
Clean Wisconsin
Elliott Donnelley Trout Unlimited
Western NY Trout Unlimited
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Green Latinos
Chicago, Bike Grid Now!
Save The River Upper St Lawrence Riverkeeper
Onondaga Audubon
Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited
For Love of Water (FLOW)
Freshwater Future
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Trout Unlimited Oak Brook Chapter
New York State Division, Izaak Walton League of America
Sisters of St Francis
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Illinois Division Izaak Walton League
Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation
Trout Unlimited Great Lakes Workgroup
Michigan League of Conservation Voters