

Mar 24, 2014

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dear Corps of Engineers,

In the release of the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study, we know that physical separation is the most effective means of preventing the transfer of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin. The threat of these invaders poses a catastrophic risk to people, wildlife, and our economies.

We need to move from studying separation to planning it.

-We must prevent an ecological catastrophe that could inflict huge damage on the Great Lakes region and the Mississippi River basin - the establishment of Asian carp and other harmful nuisance species

-Invasive species threaten a \$7 billion fishing industry in the Great Lakes, a \$16 billion boating industry, and 1.5 million jobs and \$62 billion in wages.

-\$12 million is spent annually on operation and maintenance of electric barriers that studies continue to show are flawed and ineffective.

-Preventing further transfer between the basins is a shared responsibility that should include federal state, local and private sector investment and leadership. Separation must be a product of collaboration between local leaders and partners across the region.

-The health of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River, as well as the communities and jobs they support are worth it. We cannot put a price tag on these resources.

The need for prevention of aquatic invasive species transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin is clear, and now more than ever so is the answer: physical separation.