Thank you for your comment, Ronald Simpson.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is GLMRIS50614.

Comment Date: March 31, 2011 18:37:21PM
GLMRIS
Comment ID: GLMRIS50614

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Comment Submitted:

I am writing to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to recommend permanent hydrologic separation between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin Interbasin Feasibility Study (GLMRIS).

Asian carp pose a severe and imminent threat to the Great Lakes fishery, valued at more than $7 billion. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission agree that Asian carp are a significant threat to the Great Lakes because of their size, ability to reproduce prolifically, and ability to consume large amounts of food. They are well-suited to the climate of the Great Lakes region. If they enter the Great Lakes, they would likely become a dominant species and would compete for food with valuable sport and commercial fish.

Asian carp are already present in the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal that connects the Mississippi River to the Great Lakes, including above the electric barriers. Permanent hydrologic separation is the only known method to prevent the migration of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species between the basins.

Asian carp are an immediate threat and require immediate action. The current timeline for the Corps study is too long, with recommendations not expected for the Chicago portion until 2015. The Corps needs to condense the timeline for its study and produce final results for the Chicago portion of the GLMRIS within 18 months. This timeline can be condensed by incorporating results from existing studies rather than repeating work that has already been done on risk assessment, wastewater and transportation, and by utilizing economic analysis by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Great Lakes Commission and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

The GLMRIS is intended to prevent invasive species, including Asian carp, from moving between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. It is not acceptable to wait until Asian carp are already present in the Great Lakes before considering physical separation of the two basins. Evidence shows Asian carp already are present above the electric barriers. Clearly, the electric barriers are not enough to prevent aquatic invasive species from moving between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Therefore, permanent hydrologic separation between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes is needed. The GLMRIS should also include a plan to mitigate verifiable long- or short-term economic losses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the GLMRIS.