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GLMRIS

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Comment Submitted:

J.F. Brennan is an industry leader in environmental remediation and marine construction. Currently we have over 15 million dollars invested in specialized equipment for ongoing remediation projects in the Great Lakes Basin that requires transiting the Chicago Canals. We are also investing an additional 12.5 million dollars in new barges and boats that are specifically designed for navigation on the Great Lakes. Our company is based within the inland river system, therefore we have a business need to transit the Western Rivers and Chicago Canal System in order for our equipment to reach the Great Lakes. If the government were to close the Chicago Harbor Canal Locks, thereby effectively removing any economically feasible way of reaching the Great Lakes with large marine plant, our company would forgo its anticipated investment. Furthermore, if the locks were to be closed, J.F. Brennan would not remain competitive in any remediation and construction projects along the Great Lakes, thereby jeopardizing the traditional employment for many of our people.

Brennan Marine provides harbor services and barge transportation for many companies that rely on unrestricted navigation through the Chicago Area Waterway system providing commodities to their customers through a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly method.

It is our recommendation that the Corps should concentrate on Focus Area II, including the 36 identifiable pathways for species to move between the two basins. Concentrating on the electric barriers and rotenone applications of Focus Area II will have a greater impact on stopping the movement of all invasive species through the CAWS.

As the NEPA process moves forward, the Corps must consider the economic benefits of the CAWS as well as the devastating results of closing the CAWS to navigation including; air pollution, traffic fatalities, traffic congestion, and job loss. Physical separation is not a viable option for the economy or the nation.