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Great Lakes States' Lawmakers Introduce Legislation to Permanently Prevent Asian Carp from Invading the Great Lakes

WASHINGTON – Today U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced legislation in the Senate, and Congressman Dave Camp (R-MI) introduced legislation in the House, to permanently prevent Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes. The *Permanent Prevention of Asian Carp Act* will require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct and expedite a study detailing engineering options in order to determine the best way to permanently separate the Mississippi River Basin from Lake Michigan.

In the Senate, the legislation is also cosponsored by Carl Levin (D-MI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Al Franken (D-MN), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Roland Burris (D-IL). In the House, the legislation is cosponsored by Michigan Representatives John Dingell, Vern Ehlers, Pete Hoekstra, Dale Kildee, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Sandy Levin, Thaddeus McCotter, Candice Miller, Gary Peters, Mike Rogers, Mark Schauer, Bart Stupak, and Fred Upton.

“The only way to protect our Great Lakes from Asian carp and other invasive species is to permanently separate the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow. “Our legislation will require the U.S. Army Corps to promptly conduct their study of how to best separate these water systems, so we can begin this process as soon as possible. This permanent separation can allow shipping and cargo to pass through but would prevent the water from the Chicago waterway – and any invasive species living in it – from entering Lake Michigan.”

“Last week’s discovery of an Asian Carp in Lake Calumet was a wake-up call that we need to do more and we need to do it quickly,” said Senator Dick Durbin. “We can’t wait while the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies broadly examine methods of controlling invasive species; we must act now. Our bill creates an expedited study of the feasibility of separating the waterways. While this method would require a complex feat of engineering, we need to understand the costs and benefits and whether this method offers the best hope for a long-term solution for containing not only the Carp, but other invasive species.”

“The Great Lakes is a precious natural resource, and a source of nearly a million jobs and billions of dollars in revenue for the region,” said Congressman Dave Camp. “The fact that Asian Carp were found this close is a tragedy, but not a surprising one. It is imperative we continue to work to address the issue now to ensure we stop more Carp from entering the Lakes.”

The study must begin within 30 days of the bill's enactment, and the Army Corps must send a progress report to Congress and the President within six months and again in 12 months. The full study must be completed and given to Congress and the President 18 months after the bill is enacted. It will be monitored by the Council on Environmental Quality to ensure its thorough and timely completion.

The study will also address flooding threats, Chicago wastewater, water safety operations, and barge and recreational vessel traffic alternatives. It will examine other modes of transportation for the shipping industry and influence new engineering designs to move canal traffic from one body of water to the other without transferring invasive species.