March 9, 2012

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC  20310-0108

Dear Secretary Darcy:

We the undersigned members of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus (GLLC) are writing to urge you to expedite the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Great Lakes-Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS). The GLLC is a nonpartisan, binational organization representing the eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces that are home to the Great Lakes. One of our primary goals is the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is one of our highest priorities.

As state and provincial legislators from the Great Lakes region, we understand the environmental, economic, and cultural significance of the Lakes to the people of our region. We experience firsthand the damage to the Lakes caused by aquatic invasive species. We also contribute to the high costs of preventing new introductions and controlling or attempting to eradicate the invasive species that are already here.

We recognize that the Corps has a significant task in GLMRIS, with the project encompassing two Focus Areas, 39 different species, and 27 categories of possible controls. Our principal concern at this time, however, is keeping Asian carp from invading Lake Michigan through the Chicago Area Waterway System. We are concerned that, if the Corps adheres to its current schedule and publishes a final report in 2015, it might be too late to keep the carp out of Lake Michigan.

In January, the Great Lakes Commission and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative released a report, “Restoring the Natural Divide,” on the feasibility of separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds. We hope this study will inform the Corps’s work on GLMRIS and help the Corps compress its schedule for completing the project.

We appreciate the Corps’s hard work trying to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. We would appreciate your help in moving the GLMRIS project forward on a faster track. We look forward to your response.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Minnesota State Senator Ann Rest at 651.296.2889 or Lisa Janairo at 920.458.5910.

Sincerely,

Senator Ann Rest, GLLC Chair  
Representative Karen May  
Minnesota  
Illinois
Senator Ed Charbonneau  
Indiana  

Representative Joan Bauer  
Michigan  

Representative Eileen Kowall  
Michigan  

Representative Sean McCann  
Michigan  

Senator John Moolenaar  
Michigan  

Senator Tonya Schuitmaker  
Michigan  

Representative Jim Abeler  
Minnesota  

Senator D. Scott Dibble  
Minnesota  

Senator Beverly Gard  
Indiana  

Senator Darwin Booher  
Michigan  

Representative Richard LeBlanc  
Michigan  

Senator Arlan Meekhof  
Michigan  

Representative Amanda Price  
Michigan  

Representative Dale Zorn  
Michigan  

Representative Lyndon Carlson  
Minnesota  

Representative Andrew Falk  
Minnesota
Representative Marion Greene
Minnesota

Representative Mindy Greiling
Minnesota

Representative Alice Hausman
Minnesota

Senator Linda Higgins
Minnesota

Representative Leon Lillie
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Senator Keith Langseth
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Representative Denny McNamara
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Senator Warren Limmer
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Representative John Persell
Minnesota

Representative Erin Murphy
Minnesota

Senator Roger J. Reinert
Minnesota

Senator Tom Saxhaug
Minnesota

Senator Katie Sieben
Minnesota
The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy  
March 9, 2012  
Page 4

Representative Linda Slocum  
Minnesota

Representative John Ward  
Minnesota

Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes  
New York

Senator Edna Brown  
Ohio

Senator Nina Turner  
Ohio

Senator Jane Earll  
Pennsylvania

Representative Patrick J. Harkins  
Pennsylvania

Representative Curt Sonney  
Pennsylvania

Representative Jean Wagenius  
Minnesota

Senator George D. Maziarz  
New York

Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.  
Ohio

Representative Ted Celeste  
Ohio

Representative Florindo J. Fabrizio  
Pennsylvania

Representative John Hornaman  
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Senator Mary Jo White  
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Senator Robert Cowles
Wisconsin

Representative Cory Mason
Wisconsin

Representative Mark Pocan
Wisconsin

Senator Chris Larson
Wisconsin

Representative Louis Molepske, Jr.
Wisconsin