

**Testimony of
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Before the
U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee**

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Chairwoman Johnson and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Jackson, thank you for the opportunity to provide the agency's perspective on efforts to prevent the establishment of Asian carp in the Great Lakes.

The administration continues to make restoration and protection of the Great Lakes a national priority as evidenced by President Obama's, significant investment in the ecosystem under his Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (Initiative).

EPA understands the extreme level of concern that the public feels for the ecosystem, their safety while recreating, and for their jobs. We also have an urgent need to keep Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes. As we move forward, we are working to keep Asian carp from becoming established in Lake Michigan. But to do that will require a coordinated, cooperative approach.

I will address EPA's role in efforts in the recent past and multi-stakeholder plans for moving forward.

EPA's Role

First, EPA is tasked with coordinating federal Great Lakes protection and restoration policies and efforts, under Clean Water Act Section 118 and Executive Order 13340.

EPA has been doing this and will facilitate the integration of efforts by participating agencies and stakeholders. One of the best weapons we have against Asian carp is a coordinated, cooperative approach through which each agency remains accountable for the work under its authorities, in order to ensure the most effective efforts possible. We will fail if we inhibit such accountability and integration.

This team approach has been successful and will continue to be successful.

Specifically, it worked this past December, when EPA helped coordinate an impressive multi-jurisdictional team with Illinois Department of Natural Resources to undertake a “rapid response” action. The action was needed to ensure Asian carp did not move past the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (Corps) electric barriers designed to prevent Asian carp migration through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Federal, Canadian, municipal, provincial, binational and state agencies – all of whom provided people, funding or equipment – contributed to an effort that, by all accounts, was highly successful despite numerous obstacles. This team approach also led to the draft *Framework* released this week. I will talk more about that in a minute.

The second role that EPA has to play is that of funding. Nearly a year ago, President Obama proposed and, thanks to your help, Congress passed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an unprecedented investment for rehabilitating the nation’s largest fresh surface water ecosystem.

EPA is stepping up to use its funding authority under the Initiative to help slow the migration of Asian carp. In December, EPA announced more than \$13 million in funding for emergency measures and additional monitoring to be executed by the Corps. This work will address potential bypasses between either the Des Plaines River or the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal during high water events. Currently, we are working with the other federal agencies and Illinois to fast-track additional investments under the Initiative that will address Asian carp populations that may be upstream of the electric barriers.

Next Steps

Using the coordinated team approach, participating agencies have published a draft *Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework* this week. We want to accomplish several things with this *Framework*.

First, we want to provide direction, without restricting ideas and initiatives. One thing we have learned is that the Asian carp situation continues to evolve. Therefore, the *Framework* must unify everyone to generally move in the same direction, while allowing all agencies' responses to adapt as necessary.

Second, we want to establish a multi-tiered defense. This would include structural, chemical, biological, operational and management solutions. We cannot fight biology with engineering alone.

Third, we want to create space for every player – agencies, conservation interests, businesses, the navigation industry, recreational groups and even individuals – to

engage in the effort to keep Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes. In short, this *Framework* belongs to everyone.

The Great Lakes region must unite in this effort. The December rapid response action illustrates just what we can achieve when we work together. The *Framework* is not intended to be final; it is intended to be continually improved. The first step is for everyone to have a hand in its development and its execution.

I want to thank you and the Great Lakes Congressional delegation for your concern and support of control efforts. Administrator Jackson, our partner agencies, the states and delegation all share one overriding imperative: to ensure we leave the Great Lakes better for the next generation than the way in which we inherited them.