



Inaction on Asian carp Threatens Great Lakes Restoration, Economic Recovery

ANN ARBOR, MICH. (April 26, 2010)—The United States Supreme Court today announced that it would not take up a case brought by the attorneys general of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio and New York to separate the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River to thwart the advance of the non-native Asian carp.

The states asked the court to sever the artificial connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River in light of DNA evidence suggesting that the invasive Asian carp - specifically the silver and bighead carp species - had breached an electric fence and could be in Lake Michigan.

The two great waters were connected over 100 years ago by a man-made canal system that reversed the flow of the Chicago River in large part to deal with sewage from the city of Chicago.

Asian carp escaped Southern fish farms in the 1970s and have since migrated up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which has direct access to Lake Michigan.

Bighead and silver carp are large filter-feeders that out-compete native fish for food and habitat. Individuals can weigh up to 110 pounds for bighead carp and 60 pounds for silver carp. Boaters have been injured by silver carp because the fish is easily startled and hurls itself out of the water and into or over boats in response to boat motors.

Responding to the court's announcement, **Jeff Skelding, campaign director for the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition**, said:

"The court's decision re-affirms the need for the region—and nation—to unite behind a solution that stops invasive species like the Asian carp from spreading across the country and wreaking economic and environmental harm.

"Failure to separate the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River threatens Great Lakes restoration and economic recovery and will only lead to further damage to waters that millions of people depend on for jobs, drinking water and public health.

“The restoration of the Great Lakes, and all of our nation’s great waters, hinge on tackling the urgent threat that invasive species like the Asian carp pose to people, communities, businesses and wildlife. We have solutions. It is time to use them.”

The Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives Campaign is directed by the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition. The coalition is co-chaired by the National Wildlife Federation and consists of more than 100 environmental, conservation, outdoor recreation organizations, zoos, aquariums and museums representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

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