

United States Senate

March 27, 2014

Mr. Dave Wethington
ATTN: GLMRIS Comments
US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District
231 S. LaSalle St. Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Wethington,

I am writing in response to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS). As a Hoosier with strong ties to the Great Lakes, I am passionate about protecting these natural resources and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the options presented in the study.

For decades, regional policymakers have engaged in a debate about how best to protect our Great Lakes from the spread of invasive species. Like many, I have concerns about the impact of hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. I, however, sincerely hope that the GLMRIS will shift the debate to focus on solutions around which all stakeholders can unite.

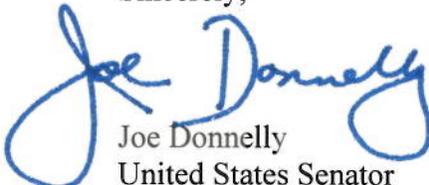
I understand the need to take immediate action to control the Asian carp risk and applaud activities toward this goal already in place; however, hydrologic separation of the basins by permanently separating the water systems either at the lakefront or at mid-system points, as proposed in some of the GLMRIS alternatives, would come at a significant cost to Northwest Indiana. This action would be detrimental to the economies of Indiana, Illinois, and surrounding areas, cost billions of dollars and several years to complete, and cannot guarantee that Asian carp will not reach the Great Lakes. Hydrologic separation could also lead to flood control difficulties and other negative environmental consequences.

While other long-term controls are being evaluated, it is critical that short-term measures be implemented to prevent the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. In addition to continuing current ongoing efforts, this could include modification to the Brandon Road Lock and Dam to reduce the risk of one-way transfer of Asian carp into Lake Michigan and beyond.

Further, the Great Lakes and rivers in the Mississippi basin are too important for the conversation among stakeholders to be just about what we oppose. We must quickly build stakeholder consensus for implementation of short- and medium-term solutions while searching for the most effective and least detrimental long-term solution.

I look forward to working with you in pursuit of our shared goal to stop the spread of Asian carp and other aquatic nuisance species.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator