

CONTACT:

Enesta Jones (EPA)
jones.enesta@epa.gov
202-564-7873
202-564-4355

Lynne Whelan (USACE)
lynne.e.whelan@usace.army.mil
312-846-5330

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President Obama's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding to be Used for Immediate Asian Carp Control Measures

WASHINGTON - Great Lakes Inter-agency Task Force Chair and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson today announced \$13 million in federal funding to prevent Asian carp from migrating further toward the Great Lakes.

"The challenge at hand requires the immediate action we're taking today. EPA and its partners are stepping up to prevent the environmental and economic destruction that can come from invasive Asian carp," said Task Force Chair Lisa P. Jackson. "President Obama's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Congressional support have given us what we need to significantly and immediately reduce the risk of Asian carp reaching the Great Lakes and destroying such a valuable ecosystem."

President Barack Obama has made restoring the Great Lakes a national priority. In February 2009, he proposed \$475 million for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an unprecedented investment in the nation's largest fresh surface water ecosystem. Congress approved that funding level and President Obama signed it into law in October. The funding for immediate carp control measures would come from the \$475 million initiative.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has identified more than \$13 million in funding needs for measures to deter Asian carp from moving closer to Lake Michigan. The majority of funding announced today will be used to close conduits and shore up low-lying lands between the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal and adjacent waterways. Agencies remain concerned that during times of heavy precipitation water – and therefore carp – can wash from adjacent waterways into the canal. Initiative funding will support work by the Corps to reduce the risk of invasion from these collateral access points. Some of the funding will support more genetic testing to pinpoint where carp may be in the Chicago Area Waterway System. The agencies will continue to identify other mechanisms for keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes.

Today's announcement follows on the heels of a November 23 announcement that a portion of initiative funding will be available for interested stakeholders through a request for proposals (RFP). Invasive species controls are a priority under the initiative. EPA, through the Great Lakes National Program Office is seeking applications from a diverse group of participants and partnerships to support the goals of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The RFP is online at <http://epa.gov/greatlakes/fund/2010rfp01>. It also follows work by several federal agencies that are part of the Inter-agency Task Force, in addition to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and other state, provincial and binational agencies to keep carp from migrating through the canal in early December while the Corps shuts off one of its electric barriers for maintenance.

The Task Force, chaired and coordinated by EPA, was created in May of 2004 under a presidential executive order and is responsible for implementing federal efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

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