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## **Governor Quinn Announces New Initiative to Control Asian Carp Population**

*Agreement will Boost Commercial Fishing Industry, Creates 180 Jobs*

CHICAGO – July 13, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today announced a new initiative to stop the spread of invasive Asian carp species into the Great Lakes. Illinois is entering into a public-private partnership that will reduce Asian carp populations where they have been discovered in Illinois waters. This first-of-its-kind partnership will help enhance the commercial fishing industry, create approximately 180 jobs and relieve pressure on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Electric Barrier System designed to stop fish from moving further towards Lake Michigan.

“Protecting the Great Lakes is vital to millions of people from Illinois and throughout the Midwest who rely on these waterways for their livelihoods,” said Governor Quinn. “Today’s agreement is one of the most aggressive efforts to address the Asian carp problem, and is a critical step to long-term economic sustainability and the success of the commercial fishing industry.”

Illinois is entering into an agreement with Chinese meat processing company Beijing Zhuochen Animal Husbandry Company and Big River Fisheries located in Pearl, Ill. to harvest 30 million pounds of carp from Illinois rivers. Big River will process, package and ship the fish to Zhuochen for resale in international markets where the fish is a delicacy. The company is expected to harvest at least 30 million pounds of fish for the purpose of this agreement by the end of 2011.

The state, through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, will invest \$2 million in capital funds to help Big River retrofit its existing facility, increase its processing capacity and expand to new production facilities in Pittsfield, which will create 61 new jobs and 120 indirect jobs. Commercial fishermen, contracted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, have already started removing Asian carp in the Illinois River where populations exist.

“The high quality and taste of the wild Asian carp from Big River Fish far exceeded our expectations. We see a tremendous market in China for the wild Asian carp,” said Mr. Liang Chang, Chairman, Beijing Zhuochen Animal Husbandry. “As Big River Fish's production capacity increases, we will be able to expand our marketing efforts in China.”

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“Big River Fish can now retrofit and expand its facilities to meet our production commitment to Zhuochen,” said Mr. Rick Smith, President, Big River Fish Corp. “The Asian carp can become an economic engine for Illinois rather than a threat, and we thank Governor Quinn for his support of our efforts.”

Today’s announcement builds on the state’s existing efforts to stop the spread of Asian carp. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC), has established an Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, which includes both short- and long-term actions intended to keep Asian carp from establishing populations in the Great Lakes. These measures include:

- Operations to reduce propagule pressure on barriers
- Increased fish collection efforts and population suppression
- Evaluation of current suppression tools, as well as future fish suppression activities
- Emergency measures to prevent bypass of fish between the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC), as well as between the Illinois & Michigan Canal and the CSSC during flood events
- Increased biological control efforts
- Construction of a third electric barrier

To view the entire control framework, or to learn more about the efforts of the ACRCC, visit [www.asiancarp.org](http://www.asiancarp.org).

In June, a Bighead Asian carp was found in Lake Calumet along the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). This is the first physical specimen that has been found in the CAWS above the Electric Barrier System. Since the find, Illinois along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and commercial fishermen have intensely sampled both Lake Calumet and the Calumet River leading to Lake Michigan. No other Asian carp have been found in the Chicago area waterway system to date.

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