

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 20, 2017

Mr. Ryan A. Fisher
Acting Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Fisher,

As Senators representing Great Lakes states, we write to share our views on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) draft Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) for the Brandon Road Study.

First, it is imperative that the USACE meet the original timeline for completing the Chief's Report by January 2019. The USACE initiated the Brandon Road Study in April 2015 after the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) identified the Brandon Road Lock and Dam as a location to control the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. The USACE provided a 46-month timeline to complete the Brandon Road Study, with an interim step of releasing the Tentatively Selected Plan by January 2017. This was already longer than the 3x3x3 rule enacted in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (P. L. 113-121), in which feasibility studies must result in a final report in three years or less. Despite the six-month delay in the release of the TSP, we fully expect the USACE to complete its Chief's Report by January 2019. Secondly, we ask that you provide us an update on the timeline for completion of the Chief's Report.

Thirdly, USACE has indicated that implementing the recommended measures in the TSP is unlikely before 2025. This timeline is particularly concerning given recent findings that demonstrated new ways for Asian carp to enter the Great Lakes. Field studies conducted in recent years by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that small fish – including Asian carp – can become entrained between barges and transported safely through the electric dispersal barriers near Romeoville, Illinois – located approximately 25 miles from Lake Michigan. Moreover, this past June, an eight pound silver carp made its way up the Illinois River, beyond the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, and was found above the electric barrier – just nine miles from Lake Michigan.

While waterway shipping is important to the economies of the Great Lakes states, it is also essential that we prevent the devastating impacts that would occur if Asian carp invade the Great Lakes. Studies have shown those impacts would include declines in native fish species and a one-third reduction of total fish weight in Lake Erie. This threatens the Great Lakes' world-class \$7 billion/year fishing industry, \$16 billion/year recreational boating industry, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs these industries support.

We appreciate the USACE's recognition that controlling the movement of aquatic invasive species such as Asian carp is necessary, and we look forward to hearing from you on your commitment to complete the Chief's Report by January 2019.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We ask that this letter be included in the formal record of comments for the draft report.

Sincerely,



DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator
Co-Chair, Great Lakes Task Force



ROB PORTMAN
United States Senator
Co-Chair, Great Lakes Task Force



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



TAMMY DUCKWORTH
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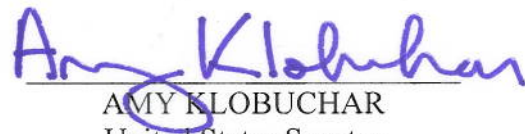
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