

August 31, 2015

Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

This letter is written on behalf of the Advisory Committee for the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). The committee urges you to recommend that Congress provide the necessary funding for the Army Corps of Engineers' FY 2017 budget to conduct engineering and design activities to complete the Brandon Road Feasibility Study. This study will assess the viability of establishing a single control point at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam to protect against the one-way, upstream transfer of aquatic invasive species (AIS) from the Mississippi River into the Great Lakes Basin.

The committee includes representatives from 30 public and private stakeholders that benefit from and have responsibilities related to the CAWS, as well as regional stakeholder groups representing commercial, recreational, and environmental interests. The committee is working to find a long-term solution that prevents the inter-basin transfer of AIS between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins while also maintaining or enhancing maritime transportation, reducing flood risk and the impact of combined sewer overflows in Illinois and Indiana, and protecting or improving water quality in the region.

The Committee requests that you direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the study as quickly as possible, consistent with the 3X3X3 project preconstruction, engineering and design reforms enacted in the Water Resource Reform and Development Act of 2014. We ask that the Feasibility Study result in a decisionmaking Record of Decision and Chief's Report to Congress.

Given the challenges and lengthy timeframe associated with a long-term solution for two-way inter-basin transfer, advancing work at Brandon Road should be one of the Corps' top priorities for achieving greater protection from AIS in the nearer term. Not only is Brandon Road an important control point for the movement of AIS such as Asian Carp, it also presents an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of control technologies and how to ensure their compatibility with transportation, the natural environment, and other important factors on the waterway.

These requests reflect the consensus of the Advisory Committee. We appreciate your support for the resources and actions needed to achieve the strongest possible protections against the movement of aquatic invasive species into the Great Lakes.

Sincerely,

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