

**City Council****Notice of Motion**

MM37.16	ACTION			Ward:All
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**Protecting the Great Lakes from Invasive Species: Asian Carp - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council write a letter to the Federal and Provincial Ministers of the Environment strongly urging all parties to work in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to identify a preferred solution to the invasive carp issue and move forward to implement that solution with the greatest sense of urgency.

**Summary**

The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River represent the largest body of surface fresh water in the world and are a vibrant, diverse ecosystem that is critically important to the economic well-being and quality of life of the Canadian and U.S. populations in the region.

Over 180 invasive species have entered the Great Lakes and its connecting waterways over the years and caused widespread damage and disruption to the natural balance of the system, as well as significant economic damage. One of the most serious threats ever presented by invasive species currently comes from Asian carp, including silver, bighead, and black varieties. These varieties of carp were introduced to the southern United States for use in fish farms for algae control in the 1970's and escaped into the Mississippi River system.

Invasive species have already inflicted hundreds of millions in damage across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and invasive carp pose a serious threat to the \$7 billion sport and commercial fishery that support the economy and help define the culture of the entire region. Invasive carp in the Mississippi River system pose one of the greatest threats to the integrity and well-being of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem, including the 40 million Canadians and Americans who live there.

The invasive carp have migrated northward through the Mississippi River system as far north as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, reducing significantly or eliminating populations of the more desirable species of fish because of their voracious food consumption

and prolific reproduction. These carp are threatening to enter the Great Lakes at a number of points across the region.

Once an invasive species establishes itself in an ecosystem, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate it, and it often inflicts serious damage on the ecosystem and imposes major costs in efforts to control it; Asian carp pose a dangerous risk of injury to recreational users on waters infested with Asian carp.

In Toronto, invasive species have taken a toll on our waterways, our parks and properties. The City of Toronto has spent millions trying to manage invasive species once they establish themselves in our city, including the Emerald Ash Borer and zebra mussels.

Canadian and U.S. citizens across the basin have expressed serious concern about the invasive carp and other invasive species, and are demanding prompt action. Many federal, state, provincial, and local government agencies in the United States and Canada have worked diligently and expended tens of millions of dollars over the past 10 years on a variety of projects to keep invasive carp out of the Great Lakes, but immediate and coordinated action is needed. Twenty nine municipalities across the US and Canada have demanded stronger action by all levels of governments to fight the invasive species Asian carp.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a multi year, comprehensive study across the U.S. side of the Great Lakes basin called the “Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study” (GLMRIS) that examines 19 separate locations where invasive carp could cross from the Mississippi River Basin to the Great Lakes Basin, and considers a large number of potential ways to stop the further migration.

Preventing the invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem needs to be approached with the greatest sense of urgency by all those responsible for dealing with this matter. Physical separation is the most effective way to keep invasive carp from entering Lake Michigan through the Chicago Area Waterway System, and such barriers would also prevent the movement of many other invasive species from one basin to the other. The physical separation is feasible and can be done in a way that maintains or enhances water quality, flood control, and transportation in the system. Additional steps must be taken in the interim to keep invasive carp out while the long term solution is put in place.

(Submitted to City Council on July 16 and 17, 2013 as Member Motion MM37.16)

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM37.16