

From the Desk of Mayor George Heartwell...

In my capacity as Chairman of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI), I spent Monday through Wednesday in Washington with GLSLCI Executive Director Dave Ullrich meeting with Administrative Officials, Congressional Delegations and federal agency representatives on the subject of Asian Carp. Of one thing I am certain, the present urgency on this issue has been felt in Washington and all hands are on deck to ensure that these invasives stay out of our Great Lakes. However, I am concerned that this urgency has not yet translated into a fully-formed, aggressive plan for doing so.

Our first meeting was with White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Chief of Staff John Corson, CEQ Associate Director for Policy Amelia Salzman, EPA Great Lakes Special Office Director Cameron Davis and White House Intergovernmental Affairs Director David Agnew. "The Carp is the most pressing issue before us today," said Corson. We discussed the EPA "Framework for Addressing the Asian Carp" which is out for comment presently and expressed our general support for the document with reservations about the less than aggressive timeline, the delayed enforcement of the Lacey Act (interstate transportation of invasives), the jurisdictional questions of state and federal government that could slow enforcement, the long-term adequacy of funding for continuous monitoring and eradication of the fish, the appropriateness of Army Corps of Engineers as lead federal agency, and the need for ecological separation of the Mississippi and Great Lakes Basins.

We met with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior Will Shafroth and his Fisheries Director Jane Lyder. They evidenced a strong interest in moving toward ecological separation and in the potential for designation of the Great Lakes Basin as a "Great Waters" National protected area. They urged us to get the Great Lakes states DNRs working together on this threat, pointing to the jurisdictional primacy of states over fisheries. "Unity", said Ms. Lyder "is really important.

We met with Deputy Director of the EPA Robert Perciasepe and drove home the importance of this threat to him. I found Mr. Perciasepe very sympathetic to the cause.

Over the course of three days we met with staff of Michigan and Illinois Congressmen and Senators (Durbin and Quigley from IL, Levin from MI). I also had opportunity to speak directly with Senators Levin and Stabenow, with Congressman Ehlers, Schauer and Quigley about the Asian Carp. While all are committed to rapidly addressing the threat, there is a clear Michigan/Illinois divide over closing the locks on the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canals. I heard that loud and clear two weeks ago when I testified at an EPA hearing in Ypsilanti, followed by Chicagoland shippers and tour boat operators who had come in busloads to have their voice heard.

With respect to closing the locks, there is a proposal gaining some momentum for a partial closure while a long-term solution is developed. The locks might be opened in a flood situation or periodically for shipping purposes with carp remediation efforts in place during the opening. I spoke with representatives of the US Geological Society who are tasked with the scientific research around Asian

Carp. They report some success in using Asian Carp pheromones to gather carp for eradication and also sonic wave deterrents.

Finally, I joined Commissioners and staff of the International Joint Commission and the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission to participate in a joint discussion about the Asian Carp. I sensed a solid commitment from both bodies to put this agenda item ahead of everything else today.

In summary, the good news is that people in places of authority and responsibility are taking the Asian Carp invasion seriously. The bad news is that the carp are knocking on the Great Lakes door and, according to some, may already be in Lake Michigan. The effort today must be to identify and eradicate rogue fish before they reach numbers large enough to form spawning populations; and to aggressively contain them within the Illinois River and halt their migration in large number up the canals to Lake Michigan.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor George K. Heartwell

2.25.10