

SR-22, As Adopted by Senate, April 22, 2015

Substitute for Senate Resolution No. 22.

A resolution to encourage the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee to fully consider all options to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp and to move as quickly as possible to determine the best long-term solution.

Whereas, The state of Michigan, surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes, is literally defined by the lakes. Consequently, the health of Michigan's economy and quality of life are intertwined with the health of the Great Lakes. Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) are an acute threat to the Great Lakes, with the potential for significant impacts to billion-dollar commercial and recreational fisheries; and

Whereas, The Chicago Area Waterway System, connecting the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, is a major pathway for AIS to spread between the basins. Zebra mussels used this pathway to spread from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River basin, leading to millions of dollars in annual control costs for industries and public utilities. Now Asian carp stand poised to move from the Mississippi River basin to the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, A permanent, long-term solution must be identified and implemented. The problem of Asian carp and other AIS using this man-made connection will not resolve itself. While the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study identified a number of solutions, it has become clear that nothing further will happen until there is broad consensus among the stakeholders in the Chicago area and the entire region; and

Whereas, There are many options and many issues that must be weighed to identify the best long-term solution. While the most important consideration is keeping out Asian carp, the costs to commercial navigation along the waterway system must also be considered. No options should be taken off the table that would effectively prevent Asian carp and other AIS movement through the system, whether hydrologic separation or innovative systems that biologically separate the basins while maintaining barge traffic; and

Whereas, The Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee represents a great opportunity for our region. Thirty-four representatives from government, industry, and commercial, recreational, and environmental groups have come together to solve this pressing problem. Their continued commitment may be our best hope to reach consensus on a long-term solution that will prevent the movement of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins; and

Whereas, The advisory committee must maintain a sense of urgency and not be satisfied with only short-term solutions. Asian carp pose an imminent threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem and economy. If allowed to enter and establish within the Great Lakes, they will be difficult, if not impossible, to control or eradicate and will become a permanent drain on resources in the region. No one knows how much time we have to prevent this irreversible and undesirable outcome; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we encourage the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee to fully consider all options to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp and to move as quickly as possible to determine the best long-term solution; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee.