

Protecting Our Water Environment

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Statement by Richard Lanyon
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Congressional Briefing on Asian Carp
January 12, 2010

The migration of Asian carp is neither a Chicago nor Illinois problem. It is a national problem. If Chicago's ecology, economy and/or environment are adversely impacted by actions to control the carp, these impacts will be felt around the country, not just by neighboring states.

The request for a preliminary injunction by Michigan and other states has over-looked and trivialized the likelihood of severe Chicago area flooding in their argument. MWRD would be prohibited from discharging excess floodwaters into Lake Michigan.

During severe rain storms flooding will result from closed lock and sluice gates at the three lakefront control locations for the Chicago Area Waterways System (CAWS) if the U.S Supreme Court concurs with Michigan. Area residents would suffer devastating consequences.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) is the stormwater management agency that controls flooding in an 884 square mile area including the city of Chicago and 124 suburban municipalities.

Michigan's claims that Asian carp are infesting the CAWS are faulty. Good science is needed to support the hypothesis that Asian carp will destroy the ecology and economy of the Great Lakes. Asian carp have been found in Lake Erie since 1995. To date, no evidence of a stable population exists. Lake Erie has not been destroyed by Asian carp.

Why such a frenzy to close the locks when proper analysis has not been rendered? It's time to create a substantial plan that will not destroy the water quality, the ecology of the canal, the economy of any region, nor cause devastating flooding to innocent residents.

To the extent possible given our statutory authority and requirements for compliance with environmental laws and regulations, MWRD will continue to cooperate with federal agencies on this issue.