



ALLIANCE for the
GREAT LAKES



Healing Our Waters®
Great Lakes Coalition

Great Lakes Groups Call for Construction to Restart on Invasive Carp Barrier

Alliance for the Great Lakes and the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

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August 26, 2026—The Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, and other Great Lakes organizations are urgently calling for construction to resume on the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, a critical set of barriers and deterrents to stop damaging invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes via a chokepoint in the Illinois River. The US Army Corps of Engineers recently halted construction on the project without warning. No reason has been given for the stoppage, despite repeated information requests from the bipartisan [Congressional Great Lakes Task Force](#), state agencies in Illinois and Michigan, and various Great Lakes organizations.

At the same time, the [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#) recently announced the presence of juvenile invasive carp a mere 80 miles from Lake Michigan, closer than they have ever been found. Their finding underscores the necessity of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, which aims to stop the advancement of invasive carp into the Great Lakes, protecting the region's \$5.1 billion fishing industry and \$16 billion recreational boating industry.

The Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, and organizations from across the region, urgently call upon the Army Corps of Engineers to restart this crucial work for the preservation of the Great Lakes and the 30 million people who rely on them.

“The combination of juvenile invasive carp being found this far upriver and the stop work order have set off alarm bells across the Great Lakes region. We have a decade of bipartisan Congressional and state support behind this project, and construction crews are ready to go. The White House and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers need to let them get to work to protect our vital \$5.1 billion fishing and \$16 billion recreational boating industries – and the lakes we all love.”

Joel Brammeier, President and CEO, Alliance for the Great Lakes

“Invasive carp are a clear and present danger to the Great Lakes environment and economy. These invasive fish have already wreaked havoc up the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, upending the ecosystem and harming local economies. The Army Corps must restart construction on Brandon Road to address this national problem before invasive carp take hold in the Great Lakes, too.”

Laura Rubin, Director, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

“The Great Lakes ecosystem is already under immense stress from invasive species. Invasive carp could pose an even greater threat to the native fish populations that sustain our commercial and sports fisheries. Now that carp have been detected closer to the Great Lakes watershed than ever, there is no time to waste. The Brandon Road Interbasin Project is our best line of defense, and construction cannot afford delay.”

Sara Walling, Water and Agriculture Program Director, Clean Wisconsin

“The Army Corps of Engineers must immediately get back to work implementing the vital Brandon Road project to reduce the risk of invasive carp entering the Great Lakes. This project is even more urgent with silver carp being found closer to Lake Michigan than ever before. The Great Lakes is a global gem. This long-planned Brandon Road project is necessary to reduce the threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem, which supplies safe clean drinking water to 42 million people, provides vital biodiversity, and supports a multibillion-dollar fishing and recreational boating industry.”

Howard Learner, CEO, Environmental Law & Policy Center

“The Brandon Road project represents years of bipartisan collaboration and a critical shared investment in the future of our waterways, communities, and economy. Invasive carp could fundamentally disrupt the Great Lakes ecosystem, threatening native wildlife, water quality, and the communities and industries that depend on these waters. We cannot afford to let unexplained delays put that investment, and the Great Lakes themselves, at risk. The Army Corps should resume construction immediately and ensure this critical line of defense is completed before invasive carp get any closer.”

Jen Walling, CEO, Illinois Environmental Council

"For the Trump Administration to suddenly halt work with no explanation on a project that is vital to protecting the world's largest freshwater ecosystem is simply unconscionable. Every year invasive carp get closer to establishing a foothold in the Great Lakes and wrecking untold and permanent damage on this fragile, critical water resource. We urge the Trump administration to restart work on the Brandon Road Project with all due haste and to stop playing games with the protection of the Great Lakes."

Charlotte Jameson, Chief Policy Officer, Michigan Environmental Council

“Finding hundreds of invasive carp just 80 miles from Lake Michigan is a serious warning that we cannot afford to ignore. With the threat moving closer and work at Brandon Road halted, there is no time to lose. The Army Corps should restart construction and keep moving forward on this critical protection for the Great Lakes.”

Bentley Johnson, Federal Government Affairs Director, Michigan League of Conservation Voters

"The time is now to prevent the spawning invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes. Minnesota is proud to be a Great Lakes state. But we have seen the damage invasive species, from the sea lamprey to the zebra mussel, have caused to Lake Superior. The Minnesota Environmental Partnership has closely followed the spread of Asian carp as they further threaten our fisheries. We stand with our Great Lakes colleagues in calling upon the White House to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lift the stop work order on the Brandon Road project to allow construction teams to immediately get back to work.”

Steve Morse, Executive Director, Minnesota Environmental Partnership

“The discovery of several hundred silver carp just 80 miles from Lake Michigan should be a wake-up call for all of us: this is no longer a distant or hypothetical threat—it is a clear and present danger to the Great Lakes. For years, we have worked to keep invasive carp from reaching the Great Lakes, and the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project has been a critical part of that defense. The recent decision to halt work on the project puts that protection at risk and leaves us exposed at precisely the moment we should be strengthening our defenses. We cannot afford to wait until invasive carp are at the doorstep of the Great Lakes. The time to act and to protect the Great Lakes is now.”

Marc Smith, Director, Conservation Partnerships, National Wildlife Federation

“Invasive Carp don’t care about petty politics, and they won’t stop trying to enter the Great Lakes. We cannot allow the Brandon Road Interbasin Project to be delayed. The health of the entire Great Lakes relies on this vital project, which is why Congress continues to fund it on a bipartisan basis. We urge the Administration to continue construction immediately.”

Spencer Dirrig, Vice President of Government Affairs, Ohio Environmental Council

“Invasive carp compete with native species and pose a threat to the entire Indiana Dunes region. Unfortunately, they outcompete native fish species for food and habitat and can alter water quality. Protecting the Indiana Dunes by completing the Brandon Road project will reduce the risk of them entering the region and is essential to preserving local recreation, tourism, and healthy ecosystems that make Indiana Dunes National Park such a unique and valuable natural resource in the Midwest.”

Harshini Ratnayaka, Manager of Government Affairs and Policy, Save the Dunes

“Once an invasive species is introduced – the environment it breaches is never the same. We have years of evidence that non-native species forever alter the food web, outcompete native species and risk the overall safety and stability of the waterways we all rely on for our way of life. We also know from experience that it costs far more to try and clean up the repercussions of invasive species than it does to invest in proactive protections. As we see reports of invasive carp moving closer to the Great Lakes, we need to use every available tool to prevent their introduction and safeguard the ecological integrity of this increasingly important freshwater system.”

Brian Gill, Senior Director, Government Affairs & Policy, Shedd Aquarium

"Every delay in advancing the Brandon Road Project increases the risk that invasive carp could gain access to the Great Lakes, threatening a fishery valued at billions of dollars and ecosystems that support millions of jobs and communities across the region. The science is clear, the partnerships are in place, and the need for action is immediate. We urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to resume work on this critical project without delay and maintain the momentum needed to protect the region's communities, economy, and ecosystem."

Scott Sowa, Great Lakes Program Director, The Nature Conservancy

“The Brandon Road Lock and Dam Project is not one that can afford delay while the threat it is designed to stop keeps closing the distance to Lake Michigan. We are at a critical juncture in history, a moment when a threat to a precious natural resource is understood, the tools to stop it exist, and the only real question left is whether we will act with the urgency the moment demands.

The Great Lakes hold roughly 20 percent of the world's surface fresh water and support a multibillion-dollar fishery and recreation economy across two countries and dozens of tribal nations. Once invasive carp establish a breeding population in the Great Lakes, there is no removal plan, no clean-up phase, no do-over. Now is the time for us to recognize the challenge for what it is and rise to meet it. If this project continues to be delayed, history will show that we fully understood the danger and let human shortcomings determine the fate of the Great Lakes.”

Abbie Hawley, Director of Community and Government Relations, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

“The Great Lakes are a shared resource that connect our communities, economies, and ecosystems, and we have a responsibility to protect them for generations to come. At WMEAC, we’re concerned about the growing threat of invasive carp and the potential impacts their spread could have across the Great Lakes region. The Brandon Road project offers an important opportunity to strengthen protections at a critical point before these

fish reach Lake Michigan. We hope to see the project move forward as part of a thoughtful, regional effort to safeguard the health and future of the Great Lakes.”

**Deirdre Nieves, Director of Climate Solutions and Justice, West Michigan
Environmental Action Council (WMEAC)**