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TIM PAWLENTY
Governor of Minnesota

ED RENDELL
Governor of Pennsylvania

DAVID NAFTZGER
Executive Director

35 East Wacker Drive
Suite 1850
Chicago, IL 60601

Voice: 312-407-0177
Fax: 312-407-0038
Web: www.cglg.org
e-mail: cglg@cglg.org

July 16, 2004

The Honorable Michael Leavitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Leavitt:

As Co-Chairs of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, we would like to thank you for your recent initiatives related to protecting the Great Lakes, including your leadership of the new Great Lakes Interagency Task Force. It is as Chair of this Task Force that your assistance is urgently needed to combat one of our most imminent threats to the Great Lakes. We strongly urge you to make securing full federal funding for the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal dispersal barrier a Task Force priority.

The Great Lakes Governors are committed to stopping the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species and particularly, at this time, the introduction of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes. Combating aquatic invasive species is one of the Governors' nine shared priorities for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes as outlined in our October 1, 2003 letter sent to members of Congress.

The Great Lakes form the world's largest freshwater ecosystem and continued introduction of aquatic invasive species, most particularly Asian Carp, would have devastating economic and ecological impacts based on past experience. These invaders threaten a sustainable sport fishing industry that generates \$7.3 billion in economic output annually and supports 66,000 jobs in the United States alone. Commercial fisheries and Canadian fisheries add to this economic value.

As you know, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently operating a temporary electric dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to prevent the Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes. However, this barrier is approaching the end of its three-year design life.

On May 14, 2004, the Great Lakes Governors articulated support for the House and Senate Great Lakes Task Force's appropriations request related to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship

Canal dispersal barrier (see attached letter). We are continuing to work with members of Congress to ensure that the federal government provides full federal funding for the following:

- Making the existing demonstration barrier permanent.
- Constructing a second permanent, two-pronged (two electrode arrays) barrier according to the design recommended by the Barrier Advisory Panel.
- Operating and maintaining both barriers.

We urge the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force to support these Congressional efforts.

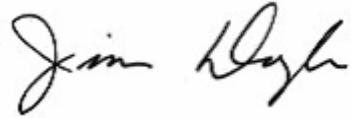
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is scheduled to start constructing a permanent, two-pronged barrier this summer, but there is currently a projected funding shortfall of approximately \$1.8 million. In part, the funding shortfall is a result of unanticipated costs. During field studies of the demonstration barrier, it was determined that barge traffic may have temporarily interrupted the electrical field. Increasing the field strength and providing redundancy by constructing two prongs for the permanent barrier will correct for this problem but adds to the cost of the project. Unfortunately, federal regulatory and legislative hurdles have precluded the provision of these critical funds and, without them, the barrier being constructed may not provide the necessary protections.

We understand that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requires these funds by the end of August to move forward with construction this summer on the permanent, two-pronged barrier. We have asked the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force made up of representatives from each of the Great Lakes States and Provinces to take the lead on ensuring that this funding is made available. They have been holding at least weekly conference calls to discuss potential solutions and have simultaneously been exploring alternatives with the Great Lakes Protection Fund, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and various other non-governmental sources.

In concert with our efforts, we believe that the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force is well positioned to help tackle the issue and we are encouraged by its inclusion in your July 15 agenda. In addition to overcoming the short and long-term funding challenges related to construction, operation and maintenance, the Task Force could provide a useful forum for better coordinating the federal agencies working on issues related to the dispersal barrier. The Task Force can also serve as a focal point for our collective efforts--illustrating the high-level intergovernmental commitment to combating this threat.

We welcome your continued leadership and look forward to working with you on this issue of critical importance. Thank you for your commitment to restoring and protecting the Great Lakes. Should there be questions, please do not hesitate to contact David Naftzger, Executive Director of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, at (312) 407-0177.

Sincerely,



Jim Doyle
Co-Chair,
Council of Great Lakes Governors
Governor, State of Wisconsin



Bob Taft
Co-Chair,
Council of Great Lakes Governors
Governor, State of Ohio

attachment

cc: Amy Farrell, Policy Advisor to the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
Gary Gulezian, Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
Tom Skinner, Regional Administrator, Region 5, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency