

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 1, 2012**CONTACT: Lynn Muench**
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Great Lakes, Mississippi River Separation Threatens Jobs and Commerce, AWO Says

ARLINGTON, VA -- The American Waterways Operators strongly believes that effecting permanent physical separation between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins as advocated by the report released yesterday by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiatives is the wrong course of action for the thousands of people, from Illinois to Louisiana and beyond, who rely on the Chicago Area Waterways System for their livelihoods. The CAWS is the sole marine transportation link for billions of dollars in vital commodities and products moving between the Great Lakes and the entire Mississippi River system. Severing that link at a cost of at least \$3.2 billion – the Great Lakes Commission’s conservative estimate – is a drastic action that would lead to the loss of \$4.7 billion in economic value – not including lost jobs – as per DePaul University’s Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development. More reasonable solutions can be implemented now to effectively prevent the transfer of invasive species while also protecting the jobs across the country dependent on essential waterborne commerce.

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