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**CHICAGO AREA ECONOMY, JOBS, ENVIRONMENT, AND QUALITY OF LIFE TO
BE IMPACTED IF LOCKS ARE CLOSED FOR ASIAN CARP, AWO WARNS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Waterways Operators (AWO), the national trade association for the U.S. tugboat, towboat and barge industry, today released statistics detailing the severe impact that a proposed lock closure would have on Chicago-area businesses and the region's economy, environment and quality of life. Barges transport millions of dollars' worth of essential goods and commodities – including the majority of the region's road salt and home heating oil – on waterways that would be shut down if the area's locks are closed, as proposed in a lawsuit filed yesterday by the State of Michigan against the State of Illinois to prevent Asian carp, suspected in the vicinity of Lake Michigan, from entering those waters.

Essential commodities transported by barge include millions of tons of coal to Chicago-area power plants, iron ore to Chicago's steel manufacturing plants, concrete for construction projects, and vital petroleum products including fuel for aircraft. Since barging is the most economical mode of freight transportation, transferring these commodities to rail or trucks would dramatically increase costs, with the burden falling on area industries and consumers. In addition, a lock closure would put hundreds of jobs in jeopardy, according to an informal survey conducted by AWO of Chicago-area businesses.

Barge transportation is the most environmentally friendly mode of freight transportation. Transferring barge-carried goods to rail or truck would have significant environmental consequences for Chicago's already-crowded highways and would result in unhealthier air quality and degradation of the highway system. Since 2004, AWO has cooperated with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other state and federal agencies concerning the operation of the electric fish barrier to protect the Great Lakes and the Western Rivers from invasive species, while ensuring the safe and efficient operation of this major transportation route. A lock closure would upset this balance without a guarantee of deterring the Asian carp. The closure would have severe economic and environmental consequences for the U.S. Midwest.

To see the statistics on the impact to the area's businesses, economy and environment, please see the attached fact sheet.

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