



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coalition of Maritime Commerce Organizations Urges Congress to Fund Successful Efforts to Address Asian Carp in the Great Lakes Region

ST. LOUIS, MO – On Friday, March 24th, UnLock Our Jobs (UOJ), a coalition of business and industry organizations dedicated to supporting the U.S. economy through the advancement of environmentally friendly domestic maritime commerce, sent a letter to key Members of Congress urging funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to further support efforts undertaken by the State of Illinois to slow, stop and reverse the migration of Asian carp, an aquatic invasive species, through cost-effective measures.

In the letter, UOJ coalition members review the record of success that the GLRI has had in working with the State of Illinois to develop a range of strategies to control Asian carp, noting that these efforts have resulted in the removal of five million pounds of Asian carp from the Illinois River in the last five years – a 68% population decrease. Critically, the letter also highlights the importance of GLRI funding for non-structural options to address Asian carp migration, to achieve both effective environmental protection and preservation of vital navigation avenues for maritime commerce.

Lynn Muench, coordinator of the UnLock Our Jobs coalition and Senior Vice President – Regional Advocacy with The American Waterways Operators, stated:

“The organizations that comprise the UnLock Our Jobs coalition are committed to responsible stewardship of the environment on the waterways on which they operate and in the communities they serve. The work of the State of Illinois, in partnership with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, has clearly demonstrated that it is possible to protect our waterways from Asian carp without the imposition of unworkable structural measures that would devastate maritime commerce, an industry that provides thousands of family-wage jobs and serves as a fundamental component of the U.S. economy. We are hopeful that Congress will recognize GLRI’s track record for addressing Asian carp in a manner that is both environmentally responsible and economically sensible, and will fund its work accordingly.”

The letter in its entirety can be viewed below.

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March 24, 2017

UnLock Our Jobs (UOJ) is a coalition of business and industry organizations dedicated to supporting the U.S. economy through the advancement of environmentally friendly domestic maritime commerce. UOJ urges you to support funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which will continue to fund efforts undertaken by the State of Illinois to provide cost-effective activities to slow, stop and reverse the migration of Asian carp.

GLRI funding is administered by the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC), which has worked with the State of Illinois in developing near- and long-term strategies to control Asian carp. For example, with GLRI's assistance, the State of Illinois has removed five million pounds of Asian carp from the Illinois River in the last five years, reducing the population by 68%, and ensuring that the leading edge of the Asian carp population has not moved up river for 25 years. Illinois has also increased monitoring activities that have significantly advanced our scientific knowledge of the fish. This partnership of state and federal agencies, in collaboration with the private sector, has provided significant positive impacts for the nation.

Preventing the further movement of Asian carp does not hinge on any single lock, port, or waterway, but rather, on a comprehensive system-wide approach. GLRI funding for non-structural options such as netting, fishing and removal of the fish, scientific study, promotion of businesses that harvest Asian carp and other non-structural actions must be incentivized to protect both our environment and the vital maritime industry and its customers that fuel the national and global economy.

UOJ members continue to focus on protecting the environment with cost-effective, targeted actions that have a measurable rate of success and, with continued funding, will continue to improve efforts to eradicate Asian carp. ACRCC is a central and nationwide component in responding to the national issue of Asian carp, while contracting with states or businesses that possess the expertise to net, fish, remove, and harvest all four Asian carp species.

Continued robust work by the State of Illinois and states further downstream, along with continued scientific study and commercial harvesting, will ensure that Asian carp does not move further upstream. Now is the time to build on the ongoing efforts to improve the health of the waterways used for maritime commerce. Appropriate and targeted funding for GLRI will serve the nation's economy and environment.

Sincerely,

The UnLock Our Jobs Coalition

5R Enterprises, LLC
American Commercial Barge Line LLC
American Great Lakes Ports Association
American River Transportation Co.
Blessey Marine Services, Inc.
Calumet River Fleeting, Inc.
Canal Barge Company, Inc.
Chemical Industry Council of Illinois
CITGO Petroleum Corporation
Economy Boat Store
Hanson Material Service
Illinois & Michigan Oil, LLC
Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers
Illinois Chamber of Commerce
Illinois Corn Growers Association
Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Manufacturers' Association
Illinois Marine Towing, Inc.
Illinois Petroleum Council
Illinois River Carriers Association
Ingram Barge Company
Inland Marine Service, Inc.
Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc.
JB Marine Service, Inc.
Kindra Lake Towing, LP
Kirby Corporation
LeBeouf Bros. Towing, LLC
Luhr Bros., Inc.
Magnolia Marine Transport Company
Marquette Transportation Company, Inc.

Marquis Marine, Inc.
Meredosia Terminals
Merrill Marine Services, Inc.
Middle River Marine, LLC
Northwest Indiana Forum
Ozinga Brothers Incorporated
Passenger Vessel Association
Ports of Indiana
River Marine Enterprises, LLC
SCF Marine Inc.
Southern Towing Company, LLC
The American Waterways Operators
The Port of Milwaukee
TPG Marines Enterprises, LLC
Waterways Council, Inc.
Wendella Sightseeing Boat Co., Inc.