United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 25, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to request your immediate assistance in strengthening the coordinated effort of federal, state and local agencies working to protect the Great Lakes from the spread of the invasive Asian carp. Several agencies have put considerable resources into preventing the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, and we appreciate that some progress has been made. But with the discovery this week of an adult Asian carp six miles from Lake Michigan, we write to you with a renewed sense of urgency, asking you to name a federal Coordinated Response Commander for Asian carp who can effectively marshal and organize these efforts to contain the spread of the carp.

State and federal officials have worked together since 2003 to develop containment strategies, including construction of electric barriers in the waterway designed to prevent the fish from reaching Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes. Now a Bighead Asian Carp has been taken from the waterway on the wrong side of the electric barrier. Scientists tell us that once Asian carp are established in the Great Lakes, significant environmental deterioration is unavoidable.

The Great Lakes are a national treasure, a significant economic resource and an invaluable recreational ecosystem. The Asian carp have the potential to debilitate a multi-billion dollar fishing industry and significantly impair the tourism industry. Of far more significance, though, is the threat this invasive species poses to the ecological viability of the Great Lakes. Preventing the Asian carp from entering Lake Michigan should be a national priority. We need the best and the brightest -- scientists, engineers, and environmental experts -- focused on this single goal.

That is why we are calling on you to immediately appoint a Coordinated Response Commander for Asian carp to fight this battle. We need someone with the knowledge and skills to direct and coordinate multiple federal, state and private sector efforts.

We are committed to working with you and your Administration to continue our efforts to fight this aggressive invasive species. Thank you for your support of the Great Lakes. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jim Inhofe

Debbie Stabenow

George V. Voinovich

Carl Levin

Russ Feingold

Charles Schumer

Amy Klobuchar

Herb Kohl

Al Franken

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Sherrod Brown

Dick Durbin