

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force letter raising alarm over delay in finalizing critical Asian Carp study

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*Senators express serious concerns over the timeline for implementing permanent measures to combat Asian carp*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin joined Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH), co-Chairs of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, in sending a letter to the acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works raising alarm over the delay in finalizing the Brandon Road Study, a critical action-plan for keeping Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes.

“It is imperative that the USACE meet the original timeline for completing the Chief’s Report by January 2019,” **wrote the Senators.** “The USACE initiated the Brandon Road Study in April 2015 after the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin Study (GLMRIS) identified the Brandon Road Lock & Dam as a location to control the movement of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes.”

Great Lakes Task Force Vice Chair Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Task Force members Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Gary Peters (D-MI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Joe Donnelly (D-IN) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) also signed the letter.

“USACE has indicated that implementing the recommended measures in the TSP is unlikely before 2025,” **the Senators continued.** “This timeline is particularly concerning given recent findings that demonstrated new ways for Asian carp to enter the Great Lakes...This past June, an eight pound Silver carp made its way up the Illinois River, beyond the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, and was found above the electric barrier – just nine miles from Lake Michigan.”

The letter is available [here](#) and the full text may be found below.

Mr. Ryan A. Fisher

Acting Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army (Civil Works)

108 Army Pentagon

Washington, DC 20310-0101

As Senators representing Great Lakes states, we write to share our views on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) draft Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) for the Brandon Road Study.

First, it is imperative that the USACE meet the original timeline for completing the Chief’s Report by January 2019. The USACE initiated the Brandon Road Study in April 2015 after the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin Study (GLMRIS) identified the Brandon Road Lock & Dam as a location to control the movement of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes. The USACE provided a 46-month timeline to complete Brandon Road Study, with an interim step of releasing the Tentatively Selected Plan by January 2017. This was already longer than the 3x3x3 rule enacted in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (P. L. 113-121), in which feasibility studies must result in a final report in three years or less. Despite the six-month delay in the release of the TSP, we fully expect the USACE to complete its Chief’s Report by January 2019. Secondly, we ask that you provide us an update on the timeline for completion of the Chief’s Report

Thirdly, USACE has indicated that implementing the recommended measures in the TSP is unlikely before 2025. This timeline is particularly concerning given recent findings that demonstrated new ways for Asian carp to enter the Great Lakes. Field studies conducted in recent years by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that small fish – including Asian Carp – can become entrained between barges and

transported safely through the electric dispersal barriers near Romeoville, Illinois – located approximately 25 miles from Lake Michigan. Moreover, this past June, an eight pound Silver carp made its way up the Illinois River, beyond the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, and was found above the electric barrier – just nine miles from Lake Michigan.

While waterway shipping is important to the economies of the Great Lakes states, it is also essential that we prevent the devastating impacts that would occur if Asian Carp invade the Great Lakes. Studies have shown those impacts would include declines in native fish species and a one-third reduction of total fish weight in Lake Erie. This threatens the Great Lakes' world-class \$7 billion/year fishing industry, \$16 billion/year recreational boating industry, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs these industries support.

We appreciate the USACE's recognition that controlling the movement of aquatic invasive species such as Asian Carp is necessary, and we look forward to hearing from you on your commitment to complete the Chief's Report by January 2019.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We ask that this letter be included in the formal record of comments for the draft report.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).

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