



*Working to protect the Mississippi River  
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

101 East Fifth Street  
Suite 2000  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

651-222-2193  
[www.fmr.org](http://www.fmr.org)  
[info@fmr.org](mailto:info@fmr.org)

**Minnesota Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee  
August 10, 2022  
Testimony by Colleen O'Connor Toberman**

Chair Ingebrigtsen and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm Colleen O'Connor Toberman, the Land Use & Planning Director at Friends of the Mississippi River.

Since 1993, FMR has engaged community members and policymakers to protect, restore, and enhance the Mississippi River, understanding that what we do here in Minnesota impacts all of our residents as well as millions downstream. FMR has been a member of the Stop Carp Coalition since its inception because we understand the serious and costly threat facing our state.

Dr. Sorensen's presentation noted that silver carp populations often reach a tipping point at which they expand very quickly without warning. What we're seeing in Minnesota is every indication of a population that could be ready to do just that. And we're not prepared for it.

Invasive carp might be reproducing, or close to reproducing, as far upstream as Lock and Dam 5. We have a potential management system at hand that could work there. But due to differences in lock and dam design, that solution won't work further upstream if we wait for the carp to pass this threshold. We don't have researched and vetted technologies that could work further upstream. We need to act here and now.

In order to implement these potential new technologies, the DNR intends to evaluate all carp management and prevention strategies available, weigh their costs and benefits, and develop an updated Invasive Carp Action Plan with a ranked matrix of action steps.

The DNR's current Carp Action Plan was originally developed in 2011 and last updated in 2014. It's outdated. It's based on the belief that carp reproduction is no further upstream than Iowa and Illinois, which is likely no longer true. It doesn't include some common management tactics that the DNR and other agencies use today like modified-unified fish catch events, and it also doesn't include intriguing new options like the bioacoustic fish fence.

In October 2020, the Stop Carp Coalition officially petitioned the DNR to update the Invasive Carp Action Plan. Nearly two years later, that update hasn't even begun. We need this to move forward with more urgency so we can act on the plan's findings.

Of course, that doesn't mean bypassing good evaluation or stakeholder participation. We want our state action plan to give robust, scientific consideration to the costs and benefits of different options. If there are options out there that could work better than a bioacoustic fish fence at Lock and Dam 5, then those should be brought forward for examination in a structured decision-making process.

But just as every action step might have some costs and benefits, these delays in updating the plan have had their costs, too. If we miss the chance to stop invasive carp at Lock and Dam 5, responding to the expanded infestation of Minnesota's waterways will be far more costly in terms of both money and damage to our natural resources and recreational treasures. There is no cure for an invasive carp infestation. There is only prevention.

Since we can't afford to wait, the Stop Carp Coalition has two requests of those of you here today:

First, we ask you to encourage the DNR to update its Invasive Carp Action Plan as quickly as possible, with no further delays. The DNR could be asked to provide reports to this committee about its progress on the plan.

And second, the DNR needs sufficient resources to implement this plan immediately upon its completion. We ask that this committee include funds in the FY24-25 budget for the DNR to fully implement the revised action plan, because we can't afford to wait any longer. Waiting for future budget cycles or grant applications will cost us too much time.

Without more urgent commitment to this issue, I worry that in the years to come we'll be looking at our rivers and wetlands from the shore rather than boating, fishing, and hunting on them. I worry that invasive carp will make our waterways too dangerous to enjoy, and too impaired to support healthy native fish populations and ecosystems.

If we don't want that to be our future, the science says that we need to act with more urgency and commitment right now. I hope you will be our partners in doing that. Thank you.

Contact: Colleen O'Connor Toberman, [ctoberman@fmr.org](mailto:ctoberman@fmr.org), 651.222.2193 x29