



Minnesota Conservation Federation

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Thank you to Chair Hawj and committee members for the time today to address the critical issue of invasive carp in Minnesota. My name is Brad Gausman and I am the Executive Director of the Minnesota Conservation Federation.

With the spread of so many new species in lakes and rivers throughout Minnesota it can be easy to think of invasive carp as another aquatic invasive species that we will learn to live with and adjust our expectations to a new normal. This is the case in many areas of the state that are realizing the effects of Eurasian milfoil, zebra mussels, and other AIS. Invasive carp are different. The presence of these fish in the state's river systems will fundamentally change the way that people interact with the water.

These fish present a physical threat to those recreating on the water. Agitated by vibration in the water these fish will leap into the air in a spectacular display. It doesn't take a large boat motor to cause them to jump. A canoe paddle on the water can do the trick. Once airborne these fish become a potentially lethal object to anyone in their path. Anyone on the water can become a victim as they paddle, fish, hunt, or are pulled behind a boat in any of the various forms of recreation we see on the rivers today.

We are so fortunate to have the quality of rivers that we do in Minnesota. The St. Croix river is a designated wild and scenic riverway, the lower Mississippi is home to some of the finest fishing in the upper midwest and pool 2 has a unique continuous fishing season that allows trophy walleye to be caught and released year round. The Minnesota River is largely undammed and presents a perfect spot for these fish to take hold.

Boating and fishing is big business in Minnesota. The state has over 800k registered boats and a 4.4 billion dollar fishing economy that will be impacted by these fish. Economies along the rivers will be disrupted as marinas, bait shops and other recreation based businesses experience a loss of business when people find new carp free areas to recreate. Carp also put at risk many civic improvement projects across Minnesota that are intended to draw people back to historically overlooked riverfront districts.

Now is the time to take action before these fish reach a population level that allows them to forever remain in our state's waters in perpetuity. The research for this project was funded by dedicated conservation funding provided by the LCCMR, the work of creating a solution to invasive carp movement at lock and dams was done by professors and students at the University of Minnesota, this truly is a Minnesota solution to this problem and its time to start implementing it right now.

I ask that you support of SF 2037.