



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

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March 22, 2023

Re: SF 2037

Chair Hawj and committee members:

Thank you for your consideration of SF 2037 to address invasive carp in Minnesota.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a non-profit organization with a mission to engage community members and other stakeholders to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in Minnesota. We represent thousands of people who care deeply about the river, including over 6,000 who participate as FMR advocates, volunteers, and members each year.

Invasive carp (silver, bighead, and grass carp species) have been found in the Mississippi, Minnesota, and St. Croix rivers within Minnesota. They are not yet believed to be reproducing here, and if we block more invasive carp from moving upstream and reproducing, we can prevent substantial population growth in Minnesota for decades.

However, right now there is no plan to block invasive carp movement in Minnesota. No agency has presented one. We have no protection in place on the Mississippi River for anything downstream of Minneapolis (where the closed Upper St. Anthony Falls lock is an effective carp barrier). This leaves 175 miles of Minnesota's Mississippi River exposed to this imminent threat, along with Lake Pepin, the Minnesota and St. Croix rivers, and countless other connected waterways.

New research by Dr. Peter Sorensen at the University of Minnesota has given us new, effective options to address this threat. SF 2037 would fund:

- Installation of a carp barrier (bio-acoustic fish fence, or BAFF) at on the Mississippi River at Lock and Dam 5 (LD5) near Winona.
- Expanded fish tagging and tracking.
- Expanded fishing to target and remove carp.
- Research to adjust the dam's spillway gates to block additional carp passage.
- Research into whether a native fish passage system could be installed at the lock.
- DNR staff to manage these efforts.

Together, this Integrated Pest Management system could be **99 percent effective** against upstream carp movement. That would prevent carp from reaching populations large enough to reproduce.

Importantly, LD5 is the only feasible location in the state for an effective deterrent system due to the design of its lock and dam. If too many carp establish themselves upstream of LD5 before a deterrent is installed, there is no “second chance” for a deterrent elsewhere.


If we let invasive carp take over, we will pay a heavy price. Not only are these fish destructive to Minnesota’s native ecosystems and fisheries, but they are dangerous to anyone on the water. Silver carp can weigh 40 pounds or more. They jump when disturbed by boaters (including non-motorized boaters) and often hit people. Fishing, waterfowl hunting, boating, paddling, and even waterskiing will carry a new risk of serious injury. If our waterways become unusable, invasive carp will take away the recreation that’s at the heart of Minnesota’s identity and tourism economy.

Once invasive carp are established, there’s also no effective “cure.” Fish removal programs are expensive and ineffective for widespread populations. Prevention is the only option. Should we abdicate this opportunity to prevent a carp invasion now, we’ll spend far more to remove fish later with less success and higher collateral damage. That removal would be a growing annual cost that we’d have to find a way to pay even when budgets are tight. An investment now, when we have a historic budget surplus, will protect both our state’s rivers and our state budget for decades to come. We may not see another opportunity to fund this kind of investment until it’s too late to stop the carp.

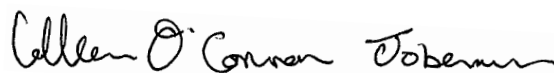
In closing, we would like to note the submitted petition with nearly 800 signatures from Minnesotans in 189 cities and townships. The Stop Carp Coalition has also submitted a list of bill endorsers including angling groups, marina owners, and conservation organizations. Minnesotans from across the state understand the threat we are facing and are asking for action now.

We urge you to support SF 2037 in full. Thank you.

For the river,



Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director



Colleen O’Connor Toberman
Land Use & Planning Director