



March 21, 2023

Committee on Environment, Climate and Legacy
Minnesota Senate Bldg, Room 1150
95 University Avenue West
St Paul, MN 55103

Re: Senate File 2037, Appropriation to Address Invasive Carp

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write this letter in support of Senate File 2037. This bill will address the threat of invasive carp in our Minnesota waters.

For decades invasive carp (silver, bighead, black and grass carp) have been working their way up the Mississippi River toward Minnesota. Hundreds have been caught in the state so far, but they are not reproducing here yet. We have a small window of time to prevent a total takeover of our waterways if we act now.

Invasive carp outcompete native fish for food and space, leading to a decline in ecosystem diversity and water quality in rivers where they are established. Silver carp can even injure boaters when they jump out of the water, decimating recreation and tourism.

**We have new solutions to prevent invasive carp from taking over our waterways.
We must implement them now by passing Senate File 2037.**

Time is Running Out

In Minnesota, invasive carp have been recorded in the Mississippi River as far north as the Twin Cities metro and in the St. Croix and Minnesota rivers. Invasive carp captures in Minnesota have increased in recent years. DNR reports 18 captures in 2019, 83 in 2020 and 71 in 2021. In 2022, a tagged silver carp traveled 35 miles upstream in a single day to Lock and Dam 5.

While DNR reports that reproductive activity is still further downstream outside of Minnesota waters, carp populations often explode unexpectedly. Nobody knows when our stretch of the river will reach a tipping point of no return.

We have only a small window of time to stop invasive carp before they start reproducing in Lake Pepin, the metro Mississippi, the St. Croix and Minnesota rivers, and other treasured waterways, including the two national park rivers, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Prevention Only, No Cure

There is no “cure” for invasive carp. Once these species dominate an ecosystem, government agencies spend millions of dollars trying to mitigate the damage with limited success. Tourism and recreation suffer as boating becomes dangerous and fishing conditions turn poor.

The much more effective and cost-efficient option is to prevent carp from reaching as much of Minnesota as possible.

Solutions at Hand

Invasive carp prevention and management requires the use of several tools and tactics, including installation of a deterrent at Lock and Dam 5 that could help block 99% of invasive carp from traveling upstream.

Right now, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources doesn’t have enough funding to implement the right strategies at a sufficient scale.

The bill will fund these strategies:

- Installation of a deterrent system at Lock and Dam 5 to block upstream movement;
- Adjustments to lock gates to improve deterrent efficacy;
- Expansion of fish surveys, tracking and removal programs;
- Ecosystem resiliency efforts for native fish; and
- Continued research.

With this additional funding, the DNR can address this threat with a multi-pronged approach that will prevent invasive carp from taking over Minnesota’s waterways and protect native fish and recreation.

We ask you to support the full appropriation for SF 2037. For any questions, you may reach our Coalition by contacting Christine Goepfert at cgoepfert@npca.org or (612) 270-8564. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Stop Carp Coalition

Coalition Members:

Christine Goepfert, Associate Director, National Parks Conservation Association

Marc Smith, Policy Director, National Wildlife Federation

Whitney Clark, Executive Director, Friends of the Mississippi River

Deb Ryun, Executive Director, Wild Rivers Conservancy

Rick Chapman, Midwest Marina Association

Anna Waugh, Acting Executive Director, Mississippi Park Connection

Brad Gausman, Executive Director, MN Conservation Federation

John Rust, President, MN Division – Izaak Walton League

Paul Austin, Executive Director, Conservation Minnesota

Rylee Hince, Executive Director, Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

Tyler Winter, Executive Director, Native Fish for Tomorrow

John Lenczewski, Executive Director, Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Barry Chouinard, FM Walleyes Unlimited, Inc.

Evan Griggs, Owner/Outfitter, Fishing For All LLC

Jeff Forester, Executive Director, MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Linda Michie, Executive Director, Friends of Pool 2

Mark Holsten, Executive Director, MN-FISH