

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Submitted Written Testimony for the
House Committee of Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs
On *Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion* (H.R. 358)
July 25, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

Thank you Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Sablan and Members of the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs. I am here today to testify on H.R. 358 –*Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion Act*.

Invasive species know no boundary. They don't distinguish between which state or city they are in. Since the 1970s, Asian Carp have overwhelmed the Mississippi watershed. The four species of Asian Carp are quickly expanding into the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins, devastating native plant life and fish populations.

In my state of Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes, we have a multi-million dollar recreation business. This environmental-invader will destroy local ecosystems and can potential devastate the local industry. The spread of Asian Carp in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins is a challenge that requires all levels of government, nonprofit advocates, and private sector partners.

There have been piecemeal attempts to address the Asian Carp threat, but no single federal strategy currently exists to protect the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins. The need for a coordinated federal strategy cannot be overstated. There have been coordinated efforts for control of Asian Carp through the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Commission in the Great Lakes; however, no coordinated effort is occurring in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins.

Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion Act places the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the lead of a new multi-agency effort that includes the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. The bill directs these agencies to develop a coordinated strategy for supporting state and regional efforts with high-level technical assistance, best practices, coordination, and other resources. The bill ensures the federal government fulfills its responsibility to be an engaged, effective, and accountable partner for our states and communities.

I introduced the bi-partisan *Strategic Response to Asian Carp Invasion Act* along with Congressman Mike Kelly (R-PA). Currently, there are 25 cosponsors. On the Senate side, Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Pat Toomey (R-PA) have introduced an identical version. During the Water Resource Development Act debate in the Senate, the Senators offered their bill as an amendment. It passed 95-0.

Over 50 state and local organizations have endorsed this legislation. In addition, researchers in Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania expressed their support of the bill to the House and Senate Natural Resource Committees.

Potential cost to the American taxpayer if this legislation is not enacted will continue to grow exponentially. Last year alone, taxpayers paid an estimated \$100 million for the control of Asian Carp. We will continue to waste taxpayer dollars without a national strategy that targets our resources, invests in new solutions, and coordinates ongoing, effective efforts to slow the spread of Asian Carp.