



HR0244

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The flow of the Chicago River into Lake Michigan
3 was reversed one hundred years ago to protect the safety of
4 drinking water for the Chicago region and to facilitate
5 navigation and commerce through a series of locks and canals;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Port of Chicago in the Chicago Area
8 Waterway System was ranked 6th in the United States for exports
9 to other countries by the United States Commerce Department;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The Chicago region's five biggest exports were
12 chemicals (\$6.1 billion), computers and electronic products
13 (\$5.2 billion), non-electrical machinery (\$3.4 billion),
14 transportation equipment (\$3.2 billion), and electrical
15 equipment, appliances, and components (\$1.7 billion); and

16 WHEREAS, A 2007 study commissioned by the Illinois Chamber
17 of Commerce estimated that \$29 billion worth of petroleum,
18 chemicals, building materials, farm products, coal, and other
19 products and raw materials travel through the Chicago area
20 locks and canals annually; and

21 WHEREAS, The continued operation of Chicago's system of

1 locks and canals is vital to ensure its continued status as the
2 strategic transportation hub of the Midwest; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
4 and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have enacted
5 several steps to prevent Asian carp from entering Lake
6 Michigan, including creating three electronic barriers, eDNA
7 testing, and two fish kills in December of 2009 and June of
8 2010; and

9 WHEREAS, Litigation has been pursued by Great Lakes states
10 to order the closure of the locks and canals to try and prevent
11 Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes; and

12 WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court has rejected the
13 preliminary injunction to close the Chicago Area Waterway
14 System's locks and canals; and

15 WHEREAS, In December of 2010, a United States District
16 Court rejected several Great Lakes states' request to shut down
17 the Chicago Area Waterway System; and

18 WHEREAS, On February 17, 2011, a measure by the United
19 States House of Representatives to close some of the Chicago
20 area locks failed by a vote of 293 "No" to 139 "Yes" votes; and

1 WHEREAS, Closing the locks would overwhelm the Chicago
2 Metropolitan Water Reclamation District tunnel system and
3 cause massive flooding, affecting more than 3 million people
4 and 1.4 million structures in Chicago and 51 surrounding
5 suburbs; and

6 WHEREAS, It is estimated that closing the locks would also
7 increase shipping costs for the Illinois agricultural
8 community by more than a half-billion dollars a year; and

9 WHEREAS, There is no viable alternative to re-routing
10 commerce that travels by barge through the Chicago Area
11 Waterway System; according to the American Waterways
12 Operators, a single barge can carry an amount of liquid cargo,
13 such as asphalt, that would fill 144 semi-trailer trucks or 46
14 rail cars; the State's rail and highway routes are simply not
15 equipped to make up that difference; and

16 WHEREAS, With one barge's capacity equal to about 60
17 trucks, the equivalent of about 571,000 truckloads of cargo
18 entered or left the region by barge last year, enough to go
19 from New York to Los Angeles and back again; and

20 WHEREAS, According to United States Department of
21 Transportation modeling, truck transportation in the Chicago
22 area accounts for 60% of the commodity flow; the annual

1 addition of 300,000 trucks would result in an additional 848 of
2 nitrogen oxides alone to the air emissions to the Chicago metro
3 area, which is equivalent to at least one natural gas peaker
4 plant in Illinois or about 20,600 residential natural gas
5 furnaces for the year; and

6 WHEREAS, At a White House "Carp Summit" of the Great Lakes
7 states, the United States Army Corps of Engineers presented a
8 plan to prevent Asian carp from entering Lake Michigan,
9 outlining several scenarios including opening the locks less
10 frequently, testing, and more electronic barriers; and

11 WHEREAS, The White House is allocating \$78.5 million to
12 prevent the Asian carp from gaining access to the Great Lakes;
13 the strategy will call for modifying the lock operations in the
14 Chicago Area Waterway System; and

15 WHEREAS, Even the temporary interruption of lock traffic
16 would be absolutely devastating to our local, State, and
17 national economy; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
19 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we urge the United States Army Corps of Engineers to seek
21 alternatives to the closure of the Chicago Area Waterway System
22 of locks and canals that would not impede commerce; and be it

1 further

2 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be sent
3 to the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States
4 Coast Guard, the United States Environmental Protection
5 Agency, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the
6 Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the White House, and
7 the members of the Illinois congressional delegation.