

Separation of the Mississippi River System and the Great Lakes Basin

WHEREAS, the Mississippi River System and the Great Lakes Basin are artificially connected by a system of canals and waterways in the Chicago area, including the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal; and

WHEREAS, the connection between the Great Lakes Basin and the Mississippi River System has opened a pathway for aquatic invasive species from one ecosystem to invade the other; and

WHEREAS, there has been the spread of many aquatic invasive species into the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basins, many of which like the zebra mussel has been extremely disruptive, both ecologically and economically; and

WHEREAS, the systems of rivers and canals in the Chicago area currently provide a pathway for the migration of aquatic invasive species both ways between the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes Basin; and

WHEREAS, the current system of electric barriers, while critically important to address the migration of invasive species while allowing barge passage, is not a 100% effective way to address the passage of such species between the two basins; and

WHEREAS, environmental DNA evidence of Asian Carp has been detected in many locations above the electrical barriers including Lake Michigan; and

WHEREAS, current state and federal action to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species between the two Basins has been inadequate to protect either watershed; and

WHEREAS, the only effective permanent solution for stopping the movement of live organisms between the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes Basin is to physically separate the two basins;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, at its annual meeting in Stevens Point, Wisconsin on April 16-18, 2010 calls for the Federal Government to take whatever actions are necessary to expedite the hydrological separation of the Mississippi River System and the Great Lakes Basin; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation formally ask the Wisconsin Congressional delegation, the Governor, the Attorney General and the DNR Secretary to aggressively seek the separation between the two Basins.

Larry Freitag, Chair
WWF Great Lakes Committee