

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OF MINNESOTA
STATE OF NEW YORK
STATE OF OHIO
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE OF WISCONSIN

August 31, 2011

The Honorable Luther Strange
501 Washington Ave.
Montgomery, AL 36130

Dear Attorney General :

We, the Attorneys General of Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin write to you about a matter of vital importance to your State as well as ours: blocking the spread of damaging invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins. All of our States, which are in or connected to these basins, have been severely harmed as non-native aquatic species, such as zebra and quagga mussels, invaded our waters, disrupting ecosystems and damaging our economies. We all face the threat that more invasive species will move, in both directions, between the Basins through the key biological pathway that artificially connects them, the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS).

For the reasons outlined in the enclosed briefing paper, we urge you to join us in seeking immediate federal action to permanently solve this problem. Specifically, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), which operates and controls key infrastructure in the CAWS, should be required to accelerate its Congressionally-mandated study of options “to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal . . . ,”¹ and then expeditiously implement changes to the CAWS infrastructure that will completely sever the ecological connection between the basins, while still protecting public health and safety and accommodating, if not improving, commercial and recreational navigation and economic activity within the region.

Unfortunately, this ecological separation will only occur through federal action, and the Corps has made clear it will not take timely action without further direction from Congress and the President. Thus, we request your participation in a joint, multi-state letter to appropriate Congressional leaders urging enactment of pending legislation – such as H. R. 892 and S. 471 – that would direct the Corps to timely complete the study to determine the feasibility and best means of implementing hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin and preventing the introduction of invasive species through the CAWS. A draft of the proposed multi-state letter is enclosed for your review. In addition, we encourage you to directly communicate your support for such legislation to your State’s Congressional delegation.

Thank you for considering this vital issue. Please let us know by September 13 if you will join us in this effort by signing the letter. If you have any questions regarding this matter,

¹ Water Resources Development Act of 2007, 110 P.L. 114; 121 Stat. 1041, § 3061(d).

please feel free to contact Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, or Peter Manning or Bob Reichel of his Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Division at 517-373-7540.

Sincerely,



Bill Schuette
Attorney General of Michigan



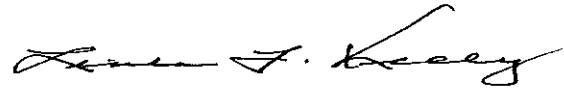
Lori Swanson
Attorney General of Minnesota



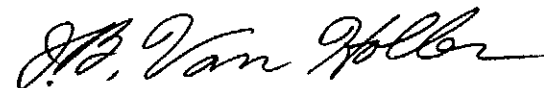
Eric T. Schneiderman
Attorney General of New York



Mike DeWine
Attorney General of Ohio



Linda K. Kelly
Attorney General of Pennsylvania



J. B. Van Hollen
Attorney General of Wisconsin

WDS/RPR
Encs.

List of 27 states receiving the Attorneys' General letter

State of Alabama

State of Arizona

State of Arkansas

State of California

State of Colorado

State of Georgia

State of Illinois

State of Indiana

State of Iowa

State of Kansas

Commonwealth of Kentucky

State of Louisiana

State of Mississippi

State of Missouri

State of Montana

State of Nebraska

State of Nevada

State of North Carolina

State of North Dakota

State of Oklahoma

State of South Dakota

State of Tennessee

State of Texas

State of Utah

Commonwealth of Virginia

State of West Virginia

State of Wyoming