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CHICAGO BOATERS OPEN TO LESS FREQUENT USE OF LOCKS

CHICAGO - FEBRUARY 15, 2010 Boaters are against the proposed closures of Chicago-area locks because of the major role the locks play in their lives as they traverse back-and-forth from the water to the winter storage facilities for their boats. They instead prefer the Obama Administrations solution, which includes a \$78.5 million approach to slow the advance of the Asian carp and a search for other means to halt the invasion, rather than closing the locks. There are 7,000 boaters in the Chicago area with moorings and winter storage areas in the Chicago harbors and in the river system. One in five Great Lakes residents is either a boat owner or a boating enthusiast.

The boaters combined economic contribution to Chicagos economy is enormous, commanding more than \$100 million. Of this total, \$15 million goes to the Chicago Park District for mooring fees, which in turn subsidizes the costs of maintaining jogging tracks and tennis courts for the citizens of Chicago. Shutting the locks in-question would cripple the recreational boating industry and would reduce the amount of funding it delivers to Chicago.

The Great Lakes Boating Federation proposes the idea that more evidence is needed to support the locks closure than the so far undefined eDNA evidence. No disclosed information has identified whether the eDNA is from live fish, dead fish or fish that were cooked and discarded in the lakes. No marine biologist employed by the concerned bodies has shared a statistical understanding of the eDNA found, despite the fact that it is coming from Lake Calumet, which is one of the dirtiest lakes in the world. The source of the one and only Asian silver carp found in the five-mile stretch before the electric barriers is still unknown.

The boating community that uses southern Lake Michigan would be willing to consider using the locks less often in an effort to combat the invasive species. In an effort to fight the Asian Carp invasion, boaters would be open to less frequent use of the locks, similar to the flotilla protocol that is utilized for bridge openings on the Chicago River during the boaters seasonal migratory transits to and from their storage yards to the lake, stated F. Ned Dikmen, chairman of the Great Lakes Boating Federation, which represents the 4.3 million boaters on the Great Lakes.

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