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HCR 27 Testimony

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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Chairman Landis, Vice Chair Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Thank you very much for allowing us to speak about the threat of Asian Carp to Lake Erie and the Great Lakes ecosystem and the possible solution available at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. This resolution has bipartisan cosponsors and support from lawmakers across the state.

Briefly, Asian Carp are an invasive species that found its way into the Mississippi River as a result of a 1994 Missouri flood that allowed the fish to escape a Lake of the Ozarks pond, into a nearby river and eventually into the Mississippi River.

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam is a lock and dam complex near Joliet, Illinois. The complex was built from 1927 to 1933 in conjunction with the construction of the Illinois Waterway, which allowed for barge travel between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. The Brandon Road Lock and Dam is considered to be the key choke point between the carp-infested Mississippi River watershed and the Great Lakes ecosystem.

In 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a study that concluded the way to stop the carps' path toward the Great Lakes was with a gauntlet of devices, including an electric barrier, noisemakers and water jets at Brandon Road. The cost of these protections was estimated to be \$275 million dollars

with the federal government agreeing to pick up 65% of the costs – or approximately \$179 million dollars. The other 35% is to come from a “non-federal partner”.

This is the major road block to the project. Our resolution asks the federal government to assume all costs (lines 52-55) for the Brandon Road project.

The additional \$97 million in federal dollars will protect the Great Lakes ecosystem from Asian Carp. If left unaddressed, the presence of Asian Carp will harm the Great Lakes region’s annual \$7 billion sport and commercial fishing industry and \$16 billion recreational boating industry.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, we will either stop Asian Carp at the Brandon Road Lock, or we will wish we did. Our Great Lakes and billions of dollars in economic activity hang in the balance. The longer we wait, the greater the threat of an ecosystem catastrophe. I would encourage favorable consideration of this resolution. We are happy to answer any questions you might have.