

Carp barrier federal funding is rejected

A \$9 million electric barrier has been built to keep Asian carp from infesting Lake Michigan, but Congress is reportedly refusing to pay to turn it on.

A House-Senate conference committee this week refused to provide the estimated \$250,000 needed for the barrier's operation along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported.

The panel, however, did agree to fund a controversial study to improve the aged St. Lawrence Seaway, another pathway for foreign species to invade the Great Lakes, the newspaper said.

The carp can grow up to 100 pounds and consume 40 percent of their body weight a day in plankton, a food source on which other Great Lakes fish species directly or indirectly depend.

Federal barrier operation and maintenance might still come via two other pending bills, one of which -- the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act -- has been stalled for three years, the newspaper said.

The Great Lakes are now home to more than 180 invasive species, and a new one is discovered, on average, every six and a half months.

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