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Coats Contact: Tara DiJulio (202) 224-5623

Lugar Contact: Suzanne Bottorff (202) 224-8370

Visclosky Contact: Sara Olson (202) 225-2461

Pence Contact: Matt Lloyd (202) 226-4379

WASHINGTON, DC – Senators Dan Coats (R-Ind.) and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Congressmen Peter Visclosky (D-Ind.) and Mike Pence (R-Ind.) today responded to a [study released](#) by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative calling for the permanent separation of the Chicago Area Water System (CAWS) from the Great Lakes. The CAWS is the sole marine transportation route between the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Michigan.

"Preventing the Asian carp from reaching Lake Michigan is a top priority, but closing the Chicago Area Water System is not the right course of action," said Coats. "This drastic measure would punish Hoosier jobs and the ports of Indiana while negatively impacting the quality of life in Northwest Indiana. We must continue efforts to keep this invasive species out of the Great Lakes while protecting Indiana jobs and Hoosier families in the area."

"While it is important that we work to keep Asian carp out of Lake Michigan, we must continue to protect the economic viability of Northwest Indiana," said Lugar. "We also have to be mindful of the public cost of a solution. The closing of the Chicago Area Water System would disrupt the Hoosier economy and potentially devastate Northwest Indiana jobs. Efforts must be made to restrict the Asian carp from reaching Lake Michigan without the implementation of a physical barrier that would hurt our state and its workers."

"Asian carp pose a grave threat to the Great Lakes, and there is no question that we must continue to be proactive in finding a long-term and sustainable solution to this threat," said Visclosky. "I remain committed to working with my colleagues from Indiana to ensure that a comprehensive solution is found that does not disproportionately affect the economy and people of Northwest Indiana."

"Asian carp represent a serious but manageable threat to the Great Lakes region, but permanently isolating the waterways of the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River is not the answer," said Pence. "Closing the Chicago Area Water System would have a devastating effect on the Northwest Indiana economy. In 2011 alone, the Ports of Indiana handled more than 8 million tons of cargo. Therefore, we must continue to work to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes while protecting Hoosier jobs and families."

Shipping along Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline contributes \$14 billion per year in economic activity and 104,000 jobs. Large scale Indiana employers, in addition to many smaller companies, reliant on the CAWS include the BP Whiting Refinery, the Safety-Kleen Refinery, ArcelorMittal Steel Indiana Harbor, ArcelorMittal Steel Burns Harbor and U.S. Steel.

Coats, Lugar, Visclosky and Pence introduced bicameral legislation last summer that would require the Army Corps of Engineers to work with federal, state and local agencies and stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive economic impact statement prior to any major federal action that could affect commercial activity in the CAWS. The legislation, which is supported by every member of the Indiana Congressional Delegation, ensures that the voice of Northwest Indiana is heard in the development of any plan that could impede economic development and the flow of commerce in the region.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the legislation.

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<http://coats.senate.gov>