



PRESS RELEASE
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Cities Initiative Celebrates Historic Signing of Agreement to Stop Spread of Invasive Carp into Great Lakes

Great Lakes mayors celebrate the historic signing of a Project Partnership Agreement to advance the Brandon Road Interbasin Project by Governor Pritzker of Illinois and Governor Whitmer of Michigan.

Chicago, IL – July 1, 2024 – Today, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative applauds Governor J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Assistant Secretary Michael Connor of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for signing a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, allowing construction to begin on the single largest investment ever made to prevent the upstream migration of invasive carp into the Great Lakes.

The signing of the PPA means that the USACE can now access approximately \$388 million in federal and state funding that already has been set aside for the project’s construction phase. It also allows the USACE to time construction to coincide with scheduled closures at Lockport Lock in early 2025.

“We are fortunate to have such a steadfast champion of the Great Lakes in Governor Pritzker,” said Mayor Billy McKinney of Zion, IL, a former chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. “By signing this agreement today, Governor Pritzker has demonstrated both good stewardship of our freshwater resources and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars by avoiding an unnecessary cost increase in the project.”

“The signing of this agreement to advance the Brandon Road Project marks a proud and historic day for Great Lakes communities,” stated Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr. of North Chicago, IL. “I commend Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for leading the charge against the threat of invasive carp, securing the best possible financial arrangement for the State of Illinois and protecting the blue economy on which our shoreline communities depend.”

“For shoreline communities like mine, Lake Michigan is among our most valuable resources, providing drinking water, economic opportunities and lifelong memories to residents and visitors alike” said Mayor Ann Taylor of Waukegan, IL. “The agreement Governor Pritzker signed today helps protect this precious ecosystem for decades to come, without placing an undue financial burden on our state or our communities.”

Mayors McKinney, Rockingham and Taylor co-sponsored a resolution urging the signing of the PPA, which was endorsed by the entire membership of the Cities Initiative at our recent Annual Conference in Montréal, Québec. The resolution also calls on the U.S. Congress to authorize a 100 percent federal cost share for operation, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and replacement for the project in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments, led by 260 mayors and chief elected officers, working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is committed to stewarding the basin's freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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