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Doom Feared as Asian Carp Advances

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Associated Press

With the country's attention riveted on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the [news](#) in late June that a live Asian carp had been caught in the Chicago Area Waterway System, just six miles from Lake Michigan, registered only a blip on the radar of the national news media.

But for state and local officials in the Great Lakes region, the arrival of the carp on the doorstep of Lake Michigan is an environmental crisis.

"The Great Lakes are on the brink of a great ecological and economic disaster that states in the region may never overcome," Gov. Ted Strickland of Ohio [wrote](#) in a letter to President Obama on Thursday. "We need immediate, decisive action."

In his letter, Governor Strickland called for the immediate construction of a permanent physical barrier on the Calumet River, where the live carp specimen was found, and Lake Michigan. "We must create an alternate mode (or modes) of moving people, cargo and storm water without allowing any aquatic species to move between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins – an approach technically referred to as 'permanent ecological separation,' " he wrote.

Federal officials had already committed \$80 million to control the spread of the carp – a voracious eater that biologists fear will outmaneuver native fish and cause a collapse in the lakes' multibillion-dollar commercial and recreational fishing industries. But the control effort, which included the construction of an underwater electric fence, has apparently failed, and politicians in the region are pressing for further action.

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– [Gov. Ted Strickland](#)

The impact of an invasion of Asian carp could be overwhelming. The fish are prolific breeders and can grow to over four feet and weigh up to 100 pounds. The climate of the Great Lakes region is also a [close match](#) to their native Asian habitats, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Strickland, along with Richard Cordray, Ohio's attorney general, also called for an

“Asian Carp Emergency Summit” to be held by July 19 with representatives from the White House, the E.P.A., the Army Corps of Engineers, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Coast Guard. He said he hoped that construction of the physical barrier would be under way by mid-August at the latest.

“The situation facing the Great Lakes region is dire,” he wrote. “If we fail to act now, we risk surrendering these lakes to an invasive species that could leave the Great Lakes an ecological wasteland.”

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