

October 17, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
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Washington, D.C. 20500

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Washington, DC 20036
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Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Midwestern Governors Association (MGA), I am writing to request your assistance in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of federal actions to combat aquatic invasive species. Specifically, the MGA asks that you designate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as the lead federal agency on aquatic invasive species efforts.

Invasive species know no jurisdictional boundaries. Further, the pace of their introduction has accelerated due to increased globalization, international trade and travel. This situation makes regional and national collaboration a necessity, but such collaboration is challenging given the involvement of multiple agencies and results in diffusion in federal leadership. While current collaboration efforts between the Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force, National Invasive Species Council, Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee and other venues has been very beneficial, there remains a need for more coordinated, robust federal leadership.

As the chief executives of their states, the Midwestern Governors appreciate the important and difficult fiscal decisions regarding agency budgets and mission areas, especially in the current economic situation. By designating USFWS as the lead agency on aquatic invasive species efforts, the financial and personnel resources of the federal government currently focused on this issue will be utilized and leveraged for the greatest impact. USFWS support for the states should be accomplished through support of states' existing Aquatic Nuisance Species plans. States are making their own significant commitments to address AIS and stand ready to be effective partners with USFWS.

The recommendation for a single, lead federal agency was the result of discussions among state leaders at an aquatic invasive species summit I convened through the MGA June 27 – 28, 2013 in Minneapolis as part of my agenda as the 2013 Chair of the MGA.

Functions of the USFWS as the lead federal agency could include:

- Establishing goals and coordinating resources at the federal level to most effectively address aquatic invasive species;

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Minnesota

Immediate Past Chair

Terry Branstad
Iowa

Past Chair, 2011

Pat Quinn
Illinois

Mike Pence
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Sam Brownback
Kansas

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Missouri

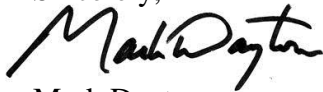
John Kasich
Ohio

Scott Walker
Wisconsin

- Developing and overseeing the implementation of a long-term plan to address aquatic invasive species on a federal level;
- Acting as an initial contact point for states in order to support a more harmonized state-federal approach;
- Helping to prioritize federal funding and leveraging the different resources of federal agencies;
- Providing leadership support regarding coordinated research;
- Implementing enhanced international screening procedures; and
- Creating and disseminating unified messages to partner agencies and the public.

Thank you for considering this request to protect and restore ecosystems by addressing the threat of aquatic invasive species. The MGA and I would welcome the opportunity to speak further with you or representatives of your administration regarding this critical national issue. Should you require further assistance or information from the MGA or me, please contact Jesse Heier of the MGA at 202-367-1112 or jheier@midwesterngovernors.org. Thank you again for your leadership and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota and Chair
Midwestern Governors Association

cc: The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
The Honorable David Vitter, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
The Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of the U.S. Department of State
The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation
The Honorable Rand Beers, Acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Gina McCarthy, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Daniel M. Ashe, Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick, Commanding General and Chief of Engineers, United States Army Corps of Engineers