

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 25, 2024

Honorable JB Pritzker  
Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

Thank you for your letter sent on June 21, 2024. We share your commitment to the successful completion of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project (BRIP), and have worked to secure a significant federal investment to move the project forward. The BRIP is critical to protecting the Great Lakes from invasive carp. For these federal investments to be used, a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) must be signed by Illinois, Michigan, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). We are pleased that all parties are working to complete the PPA by June 30, 2024, to allow the Corps to coordinate construction with existing lock closures and prevent further delays and cost increases. We are committed to continuing to support the BRIP at the federal level as it moves forward.

The importance of protecting the Great Lakes from invasive carp cannot be ignored. If invasive carp were to become established in the Great Lakes, they would outcompete existing fish populations, damaging ecosystems and significantly impairing the \$7 billion Great Lakes economy. The longer we wait to move the BRIP forward, the greater the risk these invasive carp pose to the Great Lakes.

If a PPA is not completed by June 30, USACE can no longer allocate resources to Preconstruction Engineering, and Design (PED) of BRIP. Completing the PPA prior to this deadline will enable USACE to award construction contracts for the project, allowing construction to be coordinated with a planned lock closure at the Lockport Lock and Dam. Without this coordinated work, the project will face additional delays, likely increasing costs, and creating additional issues for navigation.

We have worked diligently to provide federal support to make the BRIP a reality and protect the Great Lakes. At our urging, Congress authorized the project in the *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020* (P.L. 116-260). We also worked to secure significant federal funding investments for the project, including \$225.2 million for construction in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58), and an additional \$47.33 million in *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023* (P.L. 117-328).

As non-federal sponsors of the project, Illinois and Michigan share financial responsibility for the project, and both states have shown significant commitment to the BRIP through a \$10 million joint investment in the PED phase of the project. You have expressed concerns with Illinois taking on sole responsibility for a project that benefits the entire Great Lakes region, and we understand and share those concerns.

That is why we also worked to change the cost share for construction of the BRIP in *WRDA of 2020* from a 50 percent federal/50 percent non-federal cost-share to 80 percent federal/20 percent non-federal, and then again improved the construction cost share in the *WRDA of 2022* (P.L. 117-263) to 90 percent federal/10 percent non-federal, significantly reducing Illinois' financial responsibility for the project. In this year's Senate *WRDA of 2024* (S. 4367), we successfully increased Operations, Maintenance, Repair, Replacement and Rehabilitation to a 90 percent federal/10 percent non-federal cost-share. In coordination with the State of Illinois, we supported additional federal assistance for the BRIP in the Senate *WRDA of 2024*; however, those requests were not included in the legislation when it was marked up by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. We remain committed to working to reduce Illinois' financial responsibility in any possible legislative vehicle.

We are encouraged by coordination between Illinois and Michigan to move the project forward—and thank you and Governor Whitmer for your commitment to the BRIP. This project is critically important for Illinois and the Great Lakes. We will continue to work with you to address both immediate and long-term costs of the BRIP and look forward to a continued partnership as we work to protect the Great Lakes from invasive carp.

Sincerely,



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator