

Carp barriers to Great Lakes may fall

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The barriers keeping carp from the Illinois River out of the Great Lakes may fall victim to federal budget cuts.

A joint House-Senate committee decided to cut \$1 billion for the barriers out of the budget, the Chicago Tribune reported.

The Army Corps of Engineers says it has funding through May for the barriers. Illinois officials say the state does not have the money to pick up the tab.

"This should be a federal responsibility," said Mike Conlin, director of resource conservation at the state Department of Natural Resources.

"These barriers are in place to protect all of the Great Lakes, not just the Illinois portion of Lake Michigan."

Asian carp, imported by southern fish farmers to keep ponds clear of algae, spread up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers in less than 10 years. The fish grow up to 4 feet long and eat up to 40 percent of their weight every day.

Experts say they could devastate native fish in the Great Lakes by eating up their food supply. The barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal are now the only obstacle between the carp and Lake Michigan.

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