

March 5, 2020

Congressman Tim Burchett  
800 Market Street, Suite 110  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear Congressman Burchett:

Thank you for meeting us on February 14, 2020 to discuss the clear and present danger the Asian Silver Carp pose to our four remaining carp-free lakes on the Tennessee River and our local economies. It is imperative that we take action as soon as possible to stop this carp invasion before it devastates our lakes, like it has done at Lake Barkley in Kentucky.

The invasive silver carp have destroyed the ecology, recreation, and economies of the Mississippi and Ohio River Watersheds. **They are NOW in Chickamauga Lake.** Prior reports showed them being in Wheeler Reservoir. They are moving faster than expected. They were reported in Chickamauga Lake by a fisherman in October-which is now five months ago. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency ("TWRA") put out their press release about the incident in January and stands behind the fisherman and his report. This brings us to a very high level of alarm. The fisherman was fishing near MILE MARKER 485 which is only forty-five miles from Watts Bar Lock. The carp are heading upstream in the Tennessee River and are using the TVA locks to do it.

Addressing the devastation of Kentucky Lake and Barkley Lake, (The Land Between the Lakes) Allan Brown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Regional Director said: ***"The silver-carp population has ballooned to unmanageable numbers. Here in Kentucky, sport fishing is gone. The groups that historically flocked to the lakes for vacation have dwindled."*** We will be saying the same thing about our lakes if these invasive fish are not stopped. Our four carp-free Tennessee River lakes are: Watts Bar, Melton Hill, Ft. Loudon and Tellico lakes. They are the life

blood of our economies. They are the recreation areas for tens of thousands of residents and tourists.

When one silver carp can lay 2-5 million eggs in a summer, they can quickly destroy a lake's ecosystem. These jumping fish not only destroy the economy, fishery and ecology, they have broken jaws and fractured skulls—**jumping fish have killed**. Further migration must be prevented.

Today, the only sure way to stop them is by placing barriers at Watts Bar Lock. The Lock at Watts Bar must be closed and barriers installed (one electric barrier and one Bio-acoustic Fish Fence). The cost would be approximately \$30-\$50 million. That is nothing compared to what will be lost. A TVA study by the University of Tennessee shows that every mile of our lake's shoreline brings \$1-Million/Year to local economies. These four reservoirs together comprise over 1600 shoreline miles bringing in \$1.6 Billion annually. The silver carp have reduced the economic income of The Land Between the Lakes by more than 50%, if they reach us, it will cost this region more than \$1-Billion annually in economic loss. Clearly, protection of this economy, ecology, fishery, recreation and our natural resources must be undertaken. The sonic barrier being installed at Gunter'sville is only 90% effective, thus will not stop them—TWRA knows this. Electric barriers are the only choice.

Understand, though the word "electrocution" has unfortunately been used when discussing electric barriers, electrocution is simply "Impossible." Electrocutions in pools and at marinas is because the current is 120-Volts Alternating-Current. The voltage at the electrodes in electric barriers ranges from 0.2 to 1.2-Volts pulsed Direct-Current. This is less than in a small AAA-battery, which is 1.5-Volts DC. We must not fear electric barriers. This technology is 50-years old and many have been installed and are in use in the U.S. and Europe. There has never been an electrocution.

My professional credentials are: B.S in Biology, B.S. Ed. Biology, M.S. Ecology/Fisheries, PhD Fisheries Biology. I currently serve as the Chairman, Watts Bar Ecology and Fishery Council. I have over forty-five years of experience as a fishery biologist.


## URGENT ACTIONS REQUESTED:

1. Please contact President Trump. He is now the only person who can avert this disaster. We cannot wait for an act of Congress. Please ask our President to sign an Executive Order to close Watts Bar Lock **now**. It must be closed to **prevent economic and ecologic emergencies** and it must stay closed until such time as barriers have been constructed and are operational. Once that occurs the Lock can be re-opened.
2. While the Executive Order is in-place we also request that you simultaneously try and have a bill signed by Congress directing Watts Bar Lock be closed. [ An act of Congress is how the St. Anthony Lock was closed in Minnesota. That Lock was closed for the exact same reason we need Watts Bar Lock closed.]

Please understand the critical importance of these requests. I am not a constituent of yours, but I am appealing to you as a man who has fished on these lakes your entire lifetime. President Trump must know what a big supporter you are of him. Please tell him how much East Tennessee supports him and how we desperately need him. I am asking you to take this on as a **priority**. So very much is at stake. If you don't, we will lose this major economic engine, and the most precious and wondrous natural resource this region has to offer. Thank you for taking the actions requested.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



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