



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

September 2, 2026

President Donald Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I urge you to immediately restart construction on the Brandon Road Interbasin Project and am demanding answers on why the federal government paused work on this critical project in the first place.

Invasive carp continue to present a clear and immediate threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem and the many communities, businesses, and economies that depend on it. Yet, your administration ordered work stopped on the project at the end of July. Over a month later, the State of Illinois has not received a meaningful explanation for why.

Pausing a project of this magnitude and urgency to protect the Great Lakes – with no explanation – is alarming. After years of planning and coordination, the federal government cannot simply hit the brakes without cause and expect the Americans who rely on the Great Lakes to deal with the consequences.

Illinois has done its part to move the project forward. Since taking office, I have authorized initial engineering, built a partnership with Michigan and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, secured the first construction increment, acquired the necessary upland property, and repeatedly pushed your Administration to keep advancing the project. In May 2025, your Administration itself issued a memorandum supporting continuation of the project. Just over a year later, you broke that promise.

The Great Lakes should not become collateral damage in your partisan games. They are an essential American asset. They provide drinking water to tens of millions of people, support a massive regional economy, sustain commercial and recreational fisheries, and represent one of the country's most valuable natural resources.

Allowing this invasive species to gain a foothold in the Great Lakes would impose consequences that extend far beyond Illinois, and the costs of responding after the fact would dwarf the cost of preventing the invasion now. Every day of delay makes this project more expensive and its mission more difficult. Meanwhile, the carp are not waiting for you to abandon these games.

Just last month, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) detected several hundred juvenile silver carp roughly 80 miles from Lake Michigan and about 15 miles from the Brandon Road barrier. This is the first time invasive carp of this size have been detected this far upstream since monitoring began in 2010. I have now directed IDNR to request an emergency meeting of the project's Senior Executive Board to receive updates.

Given the urgency and importance of this situation, I am demanding answers on the following questions:

- What specific reason does your administration have for ordering the work stoppage?
- Why, after a month, has no reason been communicated to the states?
- What is the expected outcome of the review?
- As it stands currently, taxpayer money is being spent on crews who are idled. The longer the work stoppage goes on, the more costs will continue to increase for canceled and delayed orders for construction materials. Every day of the work stoppage means increased costs. Will the federal government address these costs?
- How will you explain to the people of the Great Lakes region that political considerations were placed ahead of protecting one of America's greatest natural resources?
- When will you authorize the construction of the Brandon Road Project to resume?

Instead of focusing on what the Great Lakes are called, I urge you to first focus on protecting the Great Lakes. There is still time to take action. Restart the Brandon Road Project, honor your commitments, and give the people of Illinois the answers they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB Pritzker', written in a cursive, stylized script.

JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois