

TESTIMONY ON THE BOEING COMPANY'S 787 DREAMLINER ASSEMBLY LINE COMING TO CHARLESTON

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to proudly announce that the Boeing Company has chosen North Charleston, South Carolina, as the site of a second assembly line for their 787 Dreamliner.

This is historic and exciting news for the Lowcountry and I, along with the rest of the State, warmly welcome Boeing's expanded presence in our community and the bright future of employment and prosperity that they bring with them.

I was proud to be a part of this process and I sincerely congratulate the South Carolina delegation, our State legislators, State officials and all the other parties involved for their hard work and efforts in getting Boeing to North Charleston.

Finally, I would like to highlight the outstanding leadership of Boeing's CEO, Mr. James McNerney, Jr., an accomplished businessman and high caliber individual.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with him and I am honored to welcome Mr. McNerney and his wonderful company to the Palmetto State.

THE NEED FOR THE GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

HON. DAVID R. OBEY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I commend to my colleagues the enclosed article from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about the threat to the Great lakes from invasive species and the need for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative passed by the house last week.

[From the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Nov. 2, 2009]

15,000 REASONS TO WORRY ABOUT STATE'S LAKES

(By Dan Egan)

CRANDON.—A day at the beach in Wisconsin's North Woods didn't used to go like this.

Candy Dailey spent a Fourth of July holiday splashing with grandkids on the sandy shore of Lake Metonga when she felt a nasty sting on her foot.

She didn't need to look down to know the culprit was a zebra mussel—cuts from the razor-sharp shells have become as unremarkable as bee stings since the mussels invaded Dailey's lake eight years ago.

The natives of the Caspian Sea region first turned up in North America in the summer of 1988, thanks to overseas freighters' long-standing—and ongoing—practice of dumping their contaminated ballast water in the Great Lakes, which are now home to more than 185 non-native species.

None has wreaked more damage than the mussels, which feast on Great Lakes plankton and have cost the region billions of dollars in starved fish populations, beach-trashing algae blooms and plugged industrial and municipal water intake pipes.

Now, this ecological mess is spreading inland.

"The Great Lakes are just a beachhead for invasions that are going to play out in lakes across the country in the next century," says University of Wisconsin ecologist Jake Vander Zanden. "It's just the start."

Dailey is painfully aware of this. "I'm a nurse, so I knew to make it bleed and wash it out," she says of the cut suffered from the molar-sized mussels. "I dried it off and taped it."

Trouble came in the middle of the night when she woke with a throbbing, swollen foot. By morning a tell-tale red streak was creeping up her leg. By sunset she was taking a broad-spectrum antibiotic.

Dailey recovered from the bacterial infection, but her holiday was over.

It's not the kind of story that makes a headline. It's just one infection from one cut. It's just one person swimming in one inland lake.

The problem is Wisconsin has more than 15,000 inland lakes.

REAL TROUBLE FOR REAL ESTATE

Politicians have tried for years to force overseas freighters to treat their ballast water—used to steady the ships—before discharging it at a Great Lakes port in exchange for cargo.

The shipping industry acknowledges the trouble it has pumped into the world's largest freshwater system, and its leaders profess a desire to do something about it.

Yet at the same time they have consistently fought regulations proposed by Great Lakes states to require freighters to install onboard ballast treatment systems, claiming they are impossibly stringent, expensive or inconsistent from state to state.

Members of Congress, meanwhile, have repeatedly vowed—and repeatedly failed—to craft an overarching national ballast law that is palatable to both the shipping industry and environmentalists.

The result is the door remains open to invasions, the most recent being the "bloody red shrimp" discovered in Lake Michigan in late 2006. There could well be others that have arrived since then; it can take years for populations to grow big enough to be noticed.

Biologists say the damage being done to the world's largest freshwater system cannot be overstated, but the problem has become bigger than the Great Lakes themselves. It's now clear the failure to slam the door on new Great Lakes invasions has consequences for everyday folks with cottages on inland lakes, places working-class people across the state like to claim as their favorite on earth.

"Where is the fun in playing on the shoreline anymore if our lakes are wall-to-wall zebra mussels?" asks Dailey. "Look at the money that we all pay in property taxes to live on a lake that is now not the lake that it used to be."

The potential economic impacts of this second-wave invasion could prove staggering.

Property on Forest County's Lake Metonga sells for an average of about \$1,200 a shoreline foot, and the lake has roughly 7 miles worth of it. That means a crude estimate of just this lake's shorefront value—not including any of the homes built on it—lands somewhere above \$44 million.

At the same time, one estimate of the annual savings associated with using overseas ships to haul cargo into the Great Lakes instead of transporting it via truck, train or barge is only \$55 million.

That's basically the real estate value of just one inland lake.

GLOBAL TROUBLE KNOCKS

People flock to places like the forested shores of Lake Metonga to get away from the rest of world.

It is an illusion.

Standing in front of about 400 shorefront property owners at the annual Wisconsin Lakes Convention in downtown Green Bay, University of Notre Dame professor David Lodge dimmed the lights and gave a pointed presentation last spring about the biological perils for a globe that has been stitched so tightly together by increasingly efficient transportation networks.

Lodge pulled up a slide showing the Great Lakes are directly connected to 12% of the world's ports. That means a mussel, fish or even virus picked up at a bustling global port in a place like Antwerp, Belgium, can arrive in a matter of days at the Green Bay docks just outside the doors of the conference center at which Lodge spoke.

Then Lodge showed a slide that revealed 99% of the world's ports are just two stops or fewer away from the Port of Green Bay, or any other commercial dock in the Great Lakes. This is not a theoretical problem; freighters are blamed for the arrival of nearly 60 new species since the St. Lawrence Seaway opened the Great Lakes to oceangoing vessels 50 years ago.

And spreading that misery inland like so many viruses are the fishing boats, Jet Skis and other pleasure craft rolling on trailers down the state highways that provide a 65 mph link between the Great Lakes and inland waters.

Wisconsin now has 120 inland waterways confirmed as infested with zebra mussels, though there is not a comprehensive annual survey of each lake so the actual number could be much higher.

Beyond slicing swimmers' feet, zebra mussels have been linked to inland lake outbreaks of blue-green algae that produce toxins that can kill an animal and can cause liver damage in humans.

This algae was a problem in state waters during the 1960s and '70s, but it faded with a ban on laundry detergents that contained the phosphorous that fed its blooms.

Now blue-green algae outbreaks are making a comeback, and scientists are pointing to zebra mussel infestations as a big reason.

The mussels encourage the blooms because they eat virtually every type of algae except for the blue-green algae. That gives the toxic algae a competitive advantage over its nutrient-rich cousins that have historically nourished the base of a lake's food chain.

Zebra mussels may also further promote these toxic blooms because their excrement fertilizes them.

Still, not every lake in Wisconsin is destined to become home to zebra mussels. Many, for example, don't contain enough mussel shell-building calcium. Biologist Vander Zanden's lab analyzed 923 lakes in northern Wisconsin's Vilas County and found 91 of them to be suitable habitat for zebra mussels. It's a completely different story in southeastern Wisconsin, where all but one of 334 analyzed can likely sustain zebra mussels.

But property owners on inland lakes have to worry about a lot more than just zebra mussels.

"If you want to know what's coming next, look at the species that are already in the Great Lakes," Lodge says.

And the problem doesn't stop at the state line; boat ramps around the country are launching more than just boats. Zebra mussels are widespread in the Mississippi River basin, and quagga mussels are now plugging pipes all the way out in California.

INVADERS ON THE WAY

The list of Great Lakes invaders that threaten inland waterways includes VHS, a viral disease spreading through the Great Lakes that can be lethal to dozens of fish species.