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**City of Chicago Passes Aquatic Invasive Species Legislations
*Ordinance to Help Protect Waterways***

Today, the Chicago City Council passed an ordinance which prohibits the possession of regulated aquatic invasive species.

Aquatic invasive species from around the world are invading, or may invade, Lake Michigan and regional waterways, with the potential to do irreparable harm to the waterways' environment, causing millions of dollars of damage to the region's economy.

"This legislation is important in the City of Chicago's efforts to improve the quality of our most precious resource – water. We must do everything possible to leave our waterways in a condition that will support the quality of life for many generations to come," said Mayor Daley.

The new ordinance now makes it unlawful to "import, sell, transport, carry, own, keep or otherwise possess" and "release" (for animals) and "introduce into the environment" (for plants) any of the regulated species.

While there are many more invasive species that could cause harm in the region, the initial list will focus on a critically important list of species that are threatening the region, a list of approximately 26 species (see below). The species list will not be finalized until after it has been published for public comment for 30 days. The City anticipates the list will be published for comment later this month.

The City of Chicago has developed the list in collaboration with an advisory group composed of experts in the field of aquatic invasive species, including the Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Wisconsin Sea Grant, University of Notre Dame, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Chicago Botanic Garden.

"I applaud the City of Chicago's proactive stance on this issue. Their efforts will reduce the environmental and economic costs of invasive species." Dr. Reuben Keller Postdoctoral research associate at the Center for Aquatic Conservation at the University of Notre Dame.

The City has reached out to businesses that will be affected by the ordinance, including pet shops, garden centers that sell aquatic plants, bait shops, and others. The City has responded to concerns by including an exception in the proposed ordinance to make it lawful for certain specific species to be transported live but killed before sold.

The City will continue to conduct education for businesses and the public with information about why these species are prohibited and recommended alternative non-invasive species.

The Department of Environment will take a leading role in the outreach and enforcement of the ordinance. The Department of Animal Care and Control will also have the authority to enforce the ordinance.

Invasive plants can displace native plants, which are important sources of food and shelter for wildlife. Ecological processes, such as oxygen production, may also be affected due to invasive plants changing water chemistry and flow. Unrestricted invasives can block drainage pipes, impede navigation, and hinder commercial and recreational fishing. Invasive animals, if established, can make waters unusable for recreation, reduce natural biodiversity, degrade ecosystem functions, damage commercial and recreational equipment, and increase the operating costs of industrial processes such as nuclear power plants drawing cooling water from lakes or rivers or drinking water plants.

If the public has questions or comments on this issue, they can contact 312-743-9283.

Animals (13 proposed)

Snakehead, any from the family Channidae

*Black carp, *Mylopharyngodon piceus*

Bighead carp, *Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*

* Silver carp, *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*

* Grass carp/white amur, *Ctenopharyngodon idella*

Monkey goby, *Neogobius fluviatilis fluviatilis*

European perch, *Perca fluviatilis flavescens*

Eurasian minnow, *Phoxinus phoxinus*

Asian clam, *Anodonta woodiana*

African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis*

Chinese mysterysnail, *Cipangopaludina chinensis*

Oriental weatherloach, *Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*

*Rusty crayfish, *Orconectes rusticus*

Plants (13 proposed)

Water chestnut, *Trapa natans*

Brazilian elodea, *Egeria densa*

Greater spearwort, *Ranunculus lingua*

Chameleon, *Houttuynia cordata*
Parrot feather watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum aquaticum*
Hydrilla or water thyme, *Hydrilla verticillata*
Water hyacinth, *Eichhornia crassipes*
Water spinach, *Ipomoea aquatica*
Purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*
Pale yellow iris, *Iris pseudacorus*
Eurasian watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*
European frog-bit, *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*
Flowering rush, *Butomus umbellatus*

*Proposed as species that can be transported live and killed before sold.

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