MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

SAM POLLES, Ph.D
Executive Director

November 28, 2018

Chef Philippe Parola
P.O. Box 84524
Baton Rogue, LA 70884

Dear Mr. Parola

Silver Carp and Bighead Carp have been documented throughout the Mississippi River basin. Recently, Silver Carp have been discovered in Mississippi's coastal waters. A Silver Carp was reported in April 2014 from Bay St. Louis and this month an angler snagged a Silver Carp from the Jourdan River while fishing for speckled trout. Silver Carp have also been reported from the following coastal waters in Louisiana; Vermillion Bay, Lake Pontchartrain and the Lower Pearl River. A brief literature search has revealed that Silver Carp can survive for at least 21 days in up to 8 ppt salinity and some can survive this same time period in 12 ppt salinity. Therefore, with the propensity these fish have shown to expand to new waters and become abundant, we are concerned about potential negative impacts that Silver Carp could have on our coastal area fisheries resources.

It has become evident to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks that the commercial harvest of Silver Carp and Bighead Carp is currently the most viable way to manage and control these populations. These species are now firmly established in the Mississippi River and in river systems and lakes in the Delta region of Mississippi. Our surveys of approximately 230 Mississippi freshwater commercial anglers and that their harvest of these two species increased from 60,000 pounds in 2008 to 174,400 pounds in 2011. In 2016, one firm harvested over 1 million pounds of Asian Carp from Mississippi waters. We are concerned that if these fish are not harvested they will negatively impact our native sport and commercial fish species.

Lastly, Objective 4 of the *Mississippi State Management Plan of Aquatic Invasive Species* (2013) calls for state agencies to "Control the spread of established invasive species through cooperative management activities designed to minimize impacts when eradication is not possible." In accordance with that plan, the MDWFP is ready to assist any firm with efforts to harvest these species and market products made from them.

Sincerely,

Dennis K Riecke

Dennis Riecke
Fisheries Coordinator