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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Since prehistoric times, Illinois waterways have
3 been home to four species of gar that swam alongside dinosaurs,
4 mastodons, and pioneers; and

5 WHEREAS, Alligator gar reaching more than six feet in
6 length and 300 pounds in weight once patrolled Illinois
7 waterways; and

8 WHEREAS, For a century, gar have been misnamed as
9 nuisances, threats to sportfish, "trash fish", or worse; and

10 WHEREAS, The largest of these species, the alligator gar,
11 was once extirpated from our State, but has been reintroduced
12 on a limited basis through the hard work, expertise, and
13 commitment of our Department of Natural Resources; and

14 WHEREAS, Our great institutions of higher education,
15 consisting of the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and
16 Springfield campuses, Western Illinois University, and Eastern
17 Illinois University, are engaged in research showing the
18 intrinsic value of gar species to Illinois waterways, sport
19 fisheries, and recreational opportunities; and

20 WHEREAS, Anglers, whether they use hook-and-line or bows

1 and arrows to pursue their quarry, are discovering the thrill
2 of gar fishing; and

3 WHEREAS, Food lovers across the State are beginning to
4 discover the culinary delight that is the flesh of gar; and

5 WHEREAS, The increasing popularity of gar presents new
6 opportunities for gar management to ensure the long-term
7 viability of the fishery; and

8 WHEREAS, Fully grown alligator gar is our only native
9 species capable of eating adult Asian carp; and

10 WHEREAS, Many Illinoisans and tourists look forward to the
11 day when giant alligator gar will again swim our waterways,
12 presenting a unique trophy fishing opportunity; and

13 WHEREAS, Gar have for too long been falsely accused of
14 hurting game species, when studies clearly show healthy gar
15 populations lead to healthier game species populations; and

16 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has
17 taken a two-year hiatus from their efforts to restore the
18 alligator gar population; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
2 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge the Illinois Department
3 of Natural Resources to develop protections as needed for all
4 Illinois native gar species to ensure the long term viability
5 of the shortnose gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*), the longnose
6 gar (*Lepisosteus osseus*), the spotted gar (*Lepisosteus*
7 *oculatus*), and the alligator gar (*Atractosteus spatula*), with
8 particular protections developed for alligator gar; and be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That we urge the Illinois Department of Natural
11 Resources to apply these protections as needed and include site
12 specific size and creel limits based on the size of the
13 reproductively mature gar to protect brood stock from premature
14 harvest; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That we urge the Illinois Department of Natural
16 Resources to work with partners to identify ways to expand and
17 expedite the reintroduction of alligator gar to waterways to
18 expedite the creation of a sustainable and regulated trophy
19 fishing resource in the State; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
21 delivered to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.