

October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019



Dear Members of the House Natural Resources Committee,

Bay Port Fish wants to voice its support for Commercial fishing in Michigan. We have been family owned and operated for the last 41 years, incorporated in 1895, and are the longest continuously operated business on the Great Lakes in Michigan. Commercial fishing has been vital to Michigan's economy since the early 1800s. We feed the masses who cannot or don't fish themselves. 89% of Michigan residents buy their fish dinners while only 11% fish for themselves. Over the last 80 years, commercial fishing operations have drastically dropped in numbers due to hardships and changes in the Great Lakes. There used to be thousands of us operating sustainably in Michigan, now there are only 13 families left that have survived.

We write to OPPOSE HB 4567, HB 4568, and HB 4569. These three bills would be detrimental to the 13 commercial families left in Michigan, putting many out of business and making their fishing licenses worthless. These Bills also were unfairly written by one party, the MUCC, an avid sports conservation group. The bills do not consider any commercial fishermen's views. These bills take away a species that the commercial fishermen have relied on for hundreds of years the yellow perch, they impose ridiculous and unattainable regulations for the commercial fishermen, and will make it nearly impossible to operate profitably and sustainably.

Michigan residents deserve the right to buy local Michigan fish in Michigan!! Right now, laws currently prohibit us and restrict us to the point where we cannot compete with Canadian fish from the Great Lakes in Michigan. Two big grocery chains in recent years, Meijer and Kroger, have both went with Canadian Great Lakes Fish in their stores because Michigan Commercial fishermen are limited on which species we can harvest, and Canadian fisheries are not. This is a very backwards practice. Not only is the State of Michigan paying to stock the lakes with Walleye and Lake Trout, but they are also paying Canada to fish those species for Michigan residents. Please consider all Michigan residents rights to our local Great Lakes Fish! We appreciate your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Lakon Williams, Owner and Manager Bay Port Fish Co.