



**Burt Lake  
Preservation  
Association**

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May 13, 2019

The Burt Lake Preservation Association and its several thousand members strongly support HB 4018 for the following reasons:

**Value:** Lake sturgeon are native to Michigan. They are also a threatened species. Sturgeon have been around 136 million years — since before dinosaurs roamed the Earth. They can live 150 years, grow to more than 7 feet in length, and weigh over 200 pounds. But they're slow-growing and late maturing. Sturgeon on average are 20 years old before they can reproduce. The eggs are crucial to the species' future, but they're also a delicacy, prized as some of the world's finest caviar. Sturgeon caviar can sell for up to \$200.00 an ounce in stores and restaurants. The female sturgeon can carry up to 100 pounds of eggs. That means the eggs from one sturgeon ultimately could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

**Threat:** Poaching of sturgeon for caviar is an international issue of going concern.

**Solution:** Since 1999, Sturgeon For Tomorrow has coordinated the Sturgeon Guarding Program to protect spawning lake sturgeon from would be poachers. We wholeheartedly support increasing the fine for poaching sturgeon from not less than \$500.00 or more than \$2,000.00, or both, to \$5,000.00, and the costs of prosecution. For a species to make it 136 million years, only to be poached to alarmingly low levels is just wrong.

Respectfully,

Jim Burke, President  
Burt Lake Preservation Association