



Re: HB 4567, HB 4568, HB 4569

To Member of the Natural Resources Committee:

As Executive Director of the Fishtown Preservation Society, the 501(c)3 non-profit that owns and cares for Historic Fishtown, in Leland, Michigan, I am writing to ask that you vote against HB 4567, HB 4568, and HB 4568, which would have a negative effect on few remaining Great Lakes commercial fishermen in Michigan.

Thousands of people explore Fishtown's docks each summer day, with more than 300,000 annual visitors. One of the treasured experiences is watching our commercial fishing vessels, the *Joy* and *Janice Sue*, unload fish and buying fresh and smoked fish at Carlson's market, a family business now in its fifth generation. But Fishtown is now at risk of losing this fishing experience.

Our licenses are for whitefish and chub. The chub population has been decimated in recent years to population levels that do not warrant commercial fishing, and the whitefish population is threatened by the abundance of lake trout in our fishing zone. Being able to take by-catch alone, which these bills would make impossible, would help the economic viability of the continuance of commercial fishing in Leland. There are more than enough lake trout to serve both the commercial fish industry and the sport fishing industry here. Barring their catch by commercial fishermen both exacerbates the whitefish shortage and denies to the commercial fishermen a logical and abundant source of marketable fish.

Nearly every shoreline community in Michigan once had a Fishtown and a commercial fishery, and now there are almost no commercial licenses. Fishtown is a unique site. Sharing the story of commercial fishing past and present is the mission of Fishtown Preservation. These bills would diminish this historic site and the organization's ability to share the citizens of the State of Michigan and visitors from around the world an integral part of our *ongoing* Great Lakes heritage.

Michigan has an opportunity to keep fresh local fish available to all, and commercial fishing is what makes this possible. Thank you for your consideration. Vote no on these bills.

Sincerely,

Amanda Holmes
Executive Director
Fishtown Preservation Society, Inc.