



MICHIGAN UNITED *Since 1937* CONSERVATION CLUBS

Uniting Citizens to Conserve, Protect and Enhance Michigan's Natural Resources and Outdoor Heritage

PO Box 30235 Lansing, MI 48909 | 800.777.6720 P | www.mucc.org

January 30, 2020

RE: HB 4567-69



Dear Chairman Brandt Iden and House Ways and Means Committee Members:

I write on behalf of the MUCC fisheries committee and the Lake St. Clair Walleye Association in support of HBs 4567, 4568, and 4569. Michigan's commercial fishing regulations have not been updated since the 1970s, and most of the state statute language dates to 1929. Commercial license fees have not been modified since 1968 and are inadequate to fund the program's administration and enforcement.

Today, recreational anglers bear the burden of subsidizing the commercial industry. These funds that could otherwise be used for habitat improvement, fish stocking, and fisheries education programs are being used to keep a commercial industry afloat. The legislation referenced above is supported by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, local, state and national conservation organizations, and communities around the state.

The Great Lakes are a big factor in Michigan's economy. Michigan, like other Great Lakes states, has seen outdoor recreation generate billions in economic output and hundreds of thousands of jobs. Last year 1.1 million people bought a fishing license generating \$26 million dollars. Those dollars along with monies from the Dingell-Johnson Act — which put a fee on fishing equipment in order to fund the state's wildlife conservation and management activities go towards statewide conservation efforts last year, including bald eagle banding and monitoring work.

Money needed for conservation and management activities does not come from Michigan's taxpayers. It comes through the license and equipment purchases made by Michigan's sportsmen and sportswomen. Michigan's hunters and anglers fund conservation and management of many species that would not otherwise be possible. All of the funds from licenses, bait and tackle, fuel, food, lodging and a whole host of other incidentals go towards conserving species across the state. Michigan's sport and recreational fishery is something that should not be put at risk by allowing commercial fishing to be able to take game fish.

Taking into account the value of the sport and recreational fishing in all aspects of Michigan's economy, tourism, national exposure, etc. I am asking that you support HB 4567-69.

Senate Natural Resource Committee

October 21, 2019

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Sincerely,

Tim Muir

President- Lake St. Clair Walleye Association

MUCC Fisheries Committee Chair