

April 28, 2021

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is James Mackie and I am writing this on behalf of my family's Michigan-based harvester and wholesale bait business, Mackie's Bait as well as five other Michigan harvesters.

We would like the committee to remove the section of the State law that bans the export of minnows from waters over which Michigan has jurisdiction. As a harvester I only try to harvest what I need. However, the unpredictable weather has made it harder for us to accurately gauge the amount of live baitfish we need to harvest. Being able to export our baitfish at least to other states in the Great Lakes water basin will enable us to sell any surplus. This will allow us to recoup the cost from harvesting and mandated DNR testing which must be performed in order to sell any baitfish. It will also bring in more taxable income to the state and help the already strained harvesters and wholesalers in Michigan.

In February of this year, the Natural Resources Commission approved a new order that drastically increased the amount of testing harvesters must perform in order to sell baitfish. It would be helpful if the State granted the people in this industry this exporting flexibility to offset the cost associated with the increased mandated vVHS testing.

The Michigan baitfish industry has faced many obstacles from shorter winters, increased testing, and rising cost of doing business. These obstacles have caused a significant decrease in the number of Michigan based harvesters and wholesalers for baitfish. Granting us this request will have a positive impact on this industry and give the families that remain a chance to try and pass their businesses on to the next generation.

Sincerely,

James Mackie  
Mackie's Bait

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