



# Michigan Charter Boat Association

To: Michigan House of Representatives  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Committee Members

Re: HB 4567-69

The Michigan Charter Boat Association strongly supports HB4567, HB4568 and HB4569. These bills update and set parameters surrounding the Commercial Fishing Industry in Michigan.

Currently the white fish and perch populations in Michigan Great Lakes waters are plummeting. Yet the industry still keeps harvesting these fish into extinction. Lake trout and walleye were commercially harvested into a similar situation year's back. Sport fishing men and women along with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources used their financial resources, earned through fishing license fees, and federal dollars, developed a plan including cuts in daily bag limits and closed fishing seasons to protect and rehabilitate these fish. We have been successful to a point. More work needs to be done and are we are very proud of what we have accomplished.

Now these fish are in danger of going backwards. Michigan resources are fragile. We need to monitor, and protect our fishery for generations to come.

The Commercial Fishing Industry see game fish in their nets and would like to keep them. These fish by law need to be returned to the lake as carefully as possible. These are fish paid for and rehabilitated by the sport fishing community.

Sport fishing contributes \$2.3 billion dollars to Michigan's economy annually. According to a recent study done by Michigan United Conservation Clubs. The number of anglers in the state is 1.1 million and directly supports 35,422 jobs in the state.

Licensed commercial fisheries in Michigan contribute a dockside commercial value of just over \$5 million versus the 2.3 billion contribution of sport recreational fisheries.



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The components of updating the industry with these bills are:

- Increase of penalties for unlawful tampering of commercial fishing nets.
- Prohibits abandoned gear and setting guidelines for the amount of time a net can be left unattended
- Explicitly creates a whitelist for the allowable fish available for commercial harvest.
- Increases penalties for overharvest of any fish labeled as commercial.
- Record keeping of the type and amount of fish caught as well as the gear used.
- Addresses enforceability of administrative issues with in the antiquated statute.

The MCBA would support laws, science and limits to rehabilitate white fish to maintain a sustainable commercial industry with dollars coming for federal, state and the Michigan commercial fish producers industry. Protecting these fish is the only way to save the industry. Numbers are down and the future will be determined by the industry itself.

Sincerely,

Captain Bill Winowiecki  
President  
Michigan Charter Boat Association