



October 8, 2019

The Honorable Gary Howell
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation
Michigan House of Representatives
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chairman Howell,

As businesses that are part of Michigan's \$3.7 billion recreational fishing economy, we are writing today to express support for proposed legislation that will protect Michigan's renowned sport fisheries and the many communities who rely on them. We kindly ask that when considering HB 4567, HB 4568, HB 4569 – a bill package that protects against the harvest of lake trout, yellow perch, walleye and other game fish for commercial fishing operations – you keep in mind the legacy of sportfishing in Michigan and the vast economic benefit it brings.

Recreational fishing is one of Michigan's most popular outdoor activities, and the state ranks as one of the top five states in the country in number of anglers and economic expenditures. Michigan anglers are a major driver of the state's outdoor recreation economy, with 2,716,157 anglers generating \$3.7 billion in economic output, supporting 27,979 jobs. In addition, recreational fishermen and the industry contribute substantially to conservation through fishing license fees and the excise tax on fishing equipment. Without these user-generated funds, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources would be unable to successfully manage our fisheries resources for the benefit of the public.

Compared to the state's substantial recreational fishing industry, currently there are only 19 licensed commercial fishing operations in the state. In 2015, commercial harvest of whitefish was valued at \$4.7 million.

We ask that you pass HB 4567, HB 4568 and HB 4569. These bills help to ensure that state-licensed commercial fishing operations are held responsible for the harvest and selling of game fish and require them to report the location of their nets. Updating these commercial fishing regulations and keeping sought-after gamefish protected is imperative for the future of Michigan's fisheries resources and all who depend on them.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Advanced Tackle
Bay De Noc Lures

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

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