



February 1, 2016

Representative Andrea LaFontaine, Natural Resource Committee Chair
Representative Bruce Rendon, Majority Vice-Chair
Representative Anthony Forlini
Representative Ken Goike
Representative Lisa Posthumua Lyons
Representative John Kivela
Representative Charles Kivela
Representative Charles Smiley
Representative Julie Plawecki
House of Representatives Natural Resource Committee
124 North Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

RE: Request for Committee to not take up HB No. 5255 to amend 1996 PA199, "Michigan Aquaculture Act"

Dear Natural Resource Committee Members,

The Delta County Economic Development Alliance is a private, not for profit 501(c)(3) located in Escanaba, Michigan. Our function is to lead the promotion of economic development of Delta County through the retention, expansion, and attraction of business and industry. We request the Natural Resource Committee NOT take up HB5255. We oppose this bill that has significant and far reaching impact on the established and potential future aquaculture industry in Michigan. It does not allow for responsible and sustainable economic development in our working waterfronts. Most importantly, it eliminates an opportunity to grow healthy Michigan fish to feed Michigan people for generations to come.

In the U.P. we understand the dynamics of balancing economic development with protection of our natural resources. In 2012 we started our efforts to develop Aquaculture as a new industry in our community. Our core values are Environmental Responsibility and Accountability, Product Quality and Safety, Respect for others, Integrity, Research, Objectivity, and Economic Development. Our vision is to develop a community-supported fishery that enhances our wild commercial industry with healthy, Michigan farm raised fish.

We've partnered with Coldwater Fisheries, a major player in the North American trout industry that is interested in expanding their markets to the U.S. especially Wisconsin and Chicago and growing healthy Michigan fish to feed Michigan people. This family owned

agriculture business was established in 1988 and except brood stock is a fully integrated fish farm from hatchery to grow-out to processing. They produce on average 4-6 million pounds of rainbow trout per year. Their net pen farms expand Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Ontario. They employ 100-120 people.

We remain supportive of the work the Quality of Life departments and the independent science panel have done to date. We support adaptive farming practices and regulation to ensure this is done right. Most importantly, we support rigorous environmental control and scientific analysis to determine the impact net pens would have on Lake Michigan. No one cares more about protecting the great lakes resource than us. We have expressed our sincere willingness to work with the Quality of Life Departments on this process. We've assembled a team that has the farm expertise and private financial capital to execute a controlled pilot and are here to help.

Our pilot project will create 8 direct jobs. It will fit into an established Native American commercial fishing industry, supply chain, and skilled employees. We celebrate each and every job created in our area, as they are vital to maintain the local economy and help us diversity from the vulnerable paper industry.

We ask that you keep in mind we are proposing a controlled pilot effort, to be monitored by the State and more intensely by the local Yoopers. We have tremendous local support from our elected officials, tourism organizations along with others. We remain committed to conducting a science based controlled pilot project to really understand the impact of raising healthy Michigan fish to feed Michigan people can provide.

Sincerely yours,



Vicki Schwab
Executive Director
Delta County EDA
230 Ludington Street
Escanaba, MI 49829
906-212-5408

cc: Representative Ed McBroom