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2-2-2016



ADVISORY COUNCIL

MISSION: To advance Michigan's outdoor heritage through science-based wildlife and fisheries management and the wise use of our state's natural resources, and to protect and advance the rights and traditions of Michigan citizens to hunt, fish, recreationally shoot and trap by engaging in an open dialogue with the Michigan Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus

Resolution: 2016-01

Title: CONTINUATION OF PROHIBITION ON GREAT LAKES NET-PEN FISH FARMING
Sponsor: Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, and Michigan Trout Unlimited
Date: Approved January 21, 2016, unanimously

WHEREAS, there is recent interest in beginning commercial net-pen farming of aquatic organisms in Michigan's public waters of the Great Lakes and expansion of private fish farming on inland waters of the state; and

WHEREAS, the public waters of Michigan support a recreational fishing economy that annual generates, \$4.2 billion in economic effect, \$1.4 billion in salary & wages, 38,000 jobs, \$287 million in state and local tax revenue, is ranked #3 in angler expenditures among states nationally, and #2 nationally in number of non-resident visiting anglers (only behind Florida); and

WHEREAS, releases of excessive fish waste and unused fish foods from concentrated fish rearing facilities can cause high biological oxygen demand in surrounding and/or downstream public waters, reducing or eliminating dissolved oxygen content and thereby negatively affecting native fish and wildlife populations, and contributing to nuisance and harmful algal blooms; and

WHEREAS, escapes of commercially domesticated fish stocks into the environment can result in issues with cross-breeding and reduction of genetic fitness in wild fish populations, with erosion of the ability for wild fish stocks to continue thriving; and whereas domesticated rainbow trout are the primary species targeted for production and are of the same species as Michigan's steelhead rainbow trout fishery; and

WHEREAS, concentrated fish rearing facilities pose serious fish disease and health management risks for Michigan public fisheries through the introduction of new diseases, transference of diseases between captive and wild fish, and escalation of the virulence of

Voting Members include: Michigan United Conservation Clubs; Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fisherman's Association; Safari Club International; Zero-Day; Ducks Unlimited; Michigan B.A.S.S.; Michigan Bear Hunters Association; Michigan Hunting Dog Federation; Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association; National Rifle Association; National Wild Turkey Federation; Pheasants Forever; Trout Unlimited; U.P. Bear Houndsmen Association; Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance

naturally occurring diseases; and

WHEREAS, escapes of non-native or non-naturalized aquatic organisms from commercial fish farms has occurred despite reasonable efforts by operators and regulators to prevent it, has contributing to our invasive species threats (including the Asian carp), and poses irreparable harm to Michigan's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, forms of aquaculture done "inland" can significantly negatively impact public natural resources depending on how and where they operate; and

WHEREAS, net-pen fish farming in the Great Lakes cannot adequately manage and/or prevent the aforementioned list of risks to Michigan's public resources; and

WHEREAS, Michigan governmental agencies, conservation organizations, and the federal government have worked long and hard to strongly protect Michigan's water resources and associated ecosystem from pollution, invasive species and genetic manipulation of wild stocks of aquatic organisms; and

WHEREAS, any aquaculture enterprise on public waterways will restrict or diminish the public use of such waters and thereby diminish recreational use;

NOW,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Michigan Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council recommends that the Michigan Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and the Michigan Legislature:

- Ensure continued prohibition of commercial aquaculture on Michigan's public waters, specifically not allowing Great Lakes net-pen fish farming to commence; and
- continue to protect the fisheries, wildlife, drinking water, and sportfishing, recreational boating and tourism industry by enacting policies that recognize these critical elements of our economy and quality of life must not be jeopardized; and
- Provide leadership for a process to address deficiencies in current regulatory process for forms of aquaculture conducted on privately controlled waters of the State; and
- assure that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, responsible for sustaining Michigan's world-class fisheries, has a prominent and significant role in the permitting and regulation of aquaculture practices which may be injurious to public natural resources - especially the waters of the state, aquatic organisms and sport fisheries upon which the fishing and boating industries depend.