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Testimony – House Natural Resource Commission (February 2, 2016)
Opposition to HB5255

HB5255 takes away further discussions of net pens and thwarts the opportunity to innovate new techniques or to enhance our understanding of the ecosystem

Science panel report and Ontario regulatory experience are clear that this activity can be responsibly managed and that there are further opportunities to enhance sustainability

Proper siting has shown benefits for both farmed and wild fish. Changes in the lake ecosystem suggest offshore nutrient loading may actually be advisable as a means to address concerns regarding low productivity of forage fish and poor condition of sport and commercial fish species. This may be the type of innovation that will fail to develop as a result of this bill, and will be one less tool that lake managers have to maintain stock in the recreational fishery.

Recent report from Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, indicates that existing registered farms in the North Channel contribute less than 5% of the Phosphorous load in that area of Lake Huron. With current industry production and practices, the likelihood of their Phosphorous inputs resulting in algae blooms is characterized as “low”.

Before considering any bill to restrict the potential for examining net pens in Michigan waters, please thoroughly read the Summary of the Science provided by the Quality of Life Group. And the best way to understand is to see for yourself, as several farmer’s have repeatedly extended the invitation to come visit their farms in Canada and view the impacts directly. If you are a diver, one farmer even has extra drysuits, so you are welcome drop in under a cage, while others work with ROV’s so if you don’t want to get wet, you can run the joystick and camera!

Ask to present booklets to members of the committee

Take any questions....

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