



February 2, 2016

Representative Andrea LaFontaine, Natural Resource Committee Chair
Representative Bruce Rendon, Majority Vice-Chair
Representative Anthony Forlini
Representative Ken Goike
Representative Lisa Posthumus Lyons
Representative Ed McBroom
Representative John 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 Natural Resource Committee to not take up HB 5255

Dear Natural Resource Committee Members,

We are strongly opposed to HB 5255 and encourage the committee to consider legislative options to properly regulate, rather than ban commercial net pen aquaculture farming operations in Michigan's Great Lakes Waters.

Demand for access to fresh, healthy and affordable seafood continues to provide a strong impetus for the aquaculture industry to develop a balanced approach and show the world that Michigan can have aquaculture methods and practices that bring access to fresh, healthy, affordable, Michigan grown seafood without hurting the environment.

The Michigan Aquaculture Association has worked to ensure that aquaculture projects in Michigan continue to move forward to meet the growing need for sustainable seafood, while working with producers and agencies to ensure that our production practices are in sync with the need to conserve and wisely use our precious resources. There are a number of production methods embraced by our Strategic Plan which also calls for more land-based farms and enhanced R&D in the area of recirculating aquaculture systems, however net culture in Michigan's Great Lakes waters is seen as a necessary element for successful aquaculture in Michigan.

The report produced in October by the "Quality of Life Science Review Panel" provides a basic outline for the successful introduction of net pen fish culture to Michigan's Great Lakes waters. Acceptance of an Adaptive Management approach and the BACI Method will allow for a safe and reasonable introduction of commercial scale net pen fish farming in Michigan's Great Lakes waters, while developing the scientific knowledge that is necessary to intelligently and responsibly expand and manage aquaculture within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

We hope that the Michigan Aquaculture Association can develop cooperation with the Tribal Community, Michigan's Commercial Fishermen, Michigan's Sport Fishermen and Michigan's Conservation Community to build a responsible aquaculture industry that will help revitalize Michigan's working waterfronts and waterfront communities. Aquaculture is an economic opportunity that Michigan is uniquely positioned for. Our abundant freshwater can mean job opportunities for Michigan's hardworking families as well as vital working waterfronts

that can diversify and coexist with recreation, tourism and other waterfront uses. Aquaculture is an opportunity to assure a supply of fresh, healthy and affordable seafood for Michigan and our region in a world of increasing uncertainty for seafood supply.

It is widely acknowledged that aquaculture must grow. The responsible approach is to develop a properly regulated, sustainable and economically viable aquaculture industry in Michigan, and not to allow the loud rhetoric of fear to prevail.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Vogler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Vogler
President
Michigan Aquaculture Association
1681 South 7 1/2 Road
Harrietta, MI 49638
231-389-2514