

Amy Rostkowycz

From: Steve <sg28533@att.net>
Sent: Monday, October 7, 2019 6:59 PM
To: Amy Rostkowycz; OfcSCC@senate.michigan.gov
Subject: Updated public comment on HB4780, 4567, 4568, & 4569 and SB389 -- Commercial fishing reform bills

To Whom It May Concern:

About six weeks ago, I submitted public comments to your respective House and Senate committees to express my viewpoint of HB4790; 4567; 4568 & 4569 and SB389, bills to reform and modernize commercial fishing in Michigan; these comments were resolutely pro-recreational fishing.?? I am writing to you again to modify my public comments to add to your collective deliberations of the above bills.

If my own perceived lack of movement on these bills reflects a real deadlock in the legislature on the issue of commercial fishing reform, then I believe my comments below could constitute a compromise. The topic of "bycatch" (the possession of non-targeted fish by commercial anglers) would be the vector for such a compromise. I propose that a limited possession of bycatch harvest could be legalized and gain acceptance by the recreational angler community IF the stipulations noted below are included.

Let me be clear: I still oppose legalizing current gamefish species for generalized, large-scale, targeted commercial harvest, including lake trout; yellow perch; walleye; smallmouth bass; and others. Gamefish are supported by the Michigan recreational fishing community's spending and license dollars, and residents' tax dollars, and should be more-or-less completely reserved for recreational pursuits (with the bycatch exception).

Commercial anglers could keep fish bycatch under the following criteria:

- 1) There is zero effort on the part of commercial operations to target game fish species in their netting practices. They would need to prove this via giving access to MDNR of their nets' GPS location data.
- 2) Total yearly bycatch by all commercial anglers cannot exceed 2-3% of Total Allowable Catch by all sources within each Great Lake (Michigan; Huron; or Erie); TAC is determined, I believe, by the binational lake committees. All catches of fish by commercial operations must be reported weekly to the MDNR for this system to work.?? An absolute maximum number of weekly bycatch fish that could be possessed would be established to prevent excessive harvest during any given week.

The bycatch limit is intentionally set at a low threshold to allow some harvest and retail sales by operators but not impact recreational fishing in any noticeable way.

- 3) Size limits must be established to protect long-lived and highly productive spawning fish. Lake trout over 35" and/or walleye over 20"; etc. would be prohibited from commercial possession. Alternatively, a slot limit would be acceptable to protect both younger fish and older, mature, highly-fecund fish.

- 4) VERY IMPORTANT: All bycatch must be sold by commercial fishers' captive, brick-and-mortar retail operations only and no bycatch-harvest gamefish would be allowed to be shipped out of the state or the USA. Ichthyofauna (fish) are a state resource and Michigan residents alone should benefit from the limited sale of fish bycatch.

- 5) The reporting system should be a simple, easy, online form and have the force of applicable perjury statutes behind them. The reporting system for such a compromise would be central to any such bycatch possession system since

commercial anglers cannot currently possess these fish and tracking fish harvest is important to verify non-impact on recreational fishing.

It is my hope these suggestions will facilitate passage of a set of bills to reform commercial fishing in Michigan. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephen Greer

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