



# MICHIGAN UNITED CONSERVATION CLUBS

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February 29, 2016

Dear Michigan Legislator,

Michigan United Conservation Clubs believes that natural resources management – including hunting, fishing and trapping - is essential to the health of the state's ecosystem, our residents' high quality of life and the health of our economy. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2011 hunters, trappers, and anglers spent almost \$4.8 billion in Michigan alone, and \$90 billion nationwide. The sportsmen and women of the state *are* economic drivers.

As you look towards the upcoming budget negotiations for the Michigan Fiscal Year 2016-2017, we expect that you will leverage the substantial investment that hunters, anglers, and trappers make by continuing to support and enhance key General Fund contributions to protecting and managing fisheries and wildlife, contained in the budget for the Department of Natural Resources.

Specifically, MUCC's high priority General Fund/General Purpose funding requests are as follows:

- Retain or increase the \$5 million GF/GP for Invasive Species Prevention and Control (Sec. 103-Department Initiatives)
- Increase GF/GP for wildlife disease surveillance and control (Sec. 106 Wildlife Management) in light of the 2015 discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease and Avian Influenza in Southern Michigan and the continued monitoring for Bovine Tuberculosis in Northeast Michigan. Currently there is no dedicated funding line item for these expenses and there will continue to be a wildlife and public health need to monitor and control wildlife disease outbreaks. It is expected that \$3 million will be needed for this 2017 Fiscal Year and at least 2 subsequent years or more.
- Retaining sufficient GF/GP funding for Cormorant population mitigation program (Sec. 107 Fisheries Management)

Hunters, anglers and trappers in Michigan contribute more than \$80 million of their own money through license fees to fisheries and wildlife management, along with the enforcement of these regulations. We hope that you will consider our small request of \$8.1 million in General Fund to continue to leverage this investment and protect our outdoor heritage.

Sincerely,

Dan Eichinger, Executive Director