

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center
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Minnesota House of Representatives
Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
Rep. Mike Sundin, Committee Chair
Rep. Samantha Vang, Vice Chair

Dear Chairs Sundin and Vang,

Thank you for your consideration of HF 2391 - the time is right to invest in the development of a State Aquaculture Plan.

I have been conducting aquaculture-related research and outreach for 15+ years, in Minnesota and around the world. I believe that the growth of a safe and sustainable aquaculture industry in Minnesota is not only attainable, but ought to be a priority. The reasons are many – safe and reliable food supply, local jobs, economic benefit throughout the supply chain, protection of wild fish populations, support for recreational fishing with stock enhancement and bait production, etc.

The existing aquaculture industry in Minnesota is diverse, with production of food fish, shrimp, sport fish, and bait – sometimes with fish and plants together in one integrated system. Producers are intensively raising fish indoors with intensive recirculation systems, in outdoor ponds, and harvesting fish from the wild. Each sector provides unique value to the State of Minnesota and opportunities for growth in safe and sustainable ways.

The University of Minnesota is well positioned to support the needs of the growing aquaculture industry, and more specifically, contribute to the development of a State Aquaculture Plan. In the recent years we have led research developing assessments to reduce invasive species and disease risk for the bait supply, developed diagnostic tools to screen for diseases of concern, established best management practices for food safety in aquaponics, conducted economic and market assessments to improve the value of aquaculture products, developed sustainable feeds using local plant-based protein sources, and so much more. Through formal Extension and outreach efforts we have hosted many conferences, workshops, and meetings to translate research into practice and actively participate in the Minnesota Aquaculture Association. We know there is more to do and are excited to work with our aquaculture partners to reach our collective goals.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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