



Protecting
Minnesota's lake
and river heritage
since 1994

PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122

January 17th, 2022

Rep. Rick Hansen
Chair, Env. and Natural Resources Finance and Policy
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hansen,

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, MLR, is writing in support of two bills before the committee; 1) Rep. Vang's HF 234, Game and fish; provisions for taking turtles modified and, 2)HF 245 Rough Fish Report, Appropriation.

MLR has over 270 lake associations as members. One of their key messages and educational efforts, particularly early in the spring, is the protection of turtles. Lake associations recognize that turtles are key to lake ecology in Minnesota and that turtle numbers have been falling. These lake associations encourage members to watch for turtles crossing roads, and urges them to protect turtle nests and hatchlings trying to make their way back to the water.

The changes to the licensing requirements for taking turtles and an end to the commercial turtle license effectuated by HF 234 support lake association efforts and values. These changes are long overdue and welcome.

MLR also supports HF 245 (Rep. Jordan) Report on rough fish funding provided, and money appropriated.

During the 2018 Aquatic Invaders Summit sponsored by MLR, we had a presentation on the long-lived Bigmouthed Buffalo fish. There is not much known about the Bigmouth Buffalo, but researchers have begun to understand that due to its longevity, reproduction is more complex, is native to Minnesota's waters, and is under increasing pressure from Aquatic Invasive Species and bow hunting. Investing in research is a critical first step to making wise management choices. It is a recognition that so-called "rough fish" have a value and provide ecosystem services that we do not fully understand even if they are not highly valued by sports anglers.

If there is anything we can do as an organization in support of these bills, please do not hesitate to ask. Thank you for your efforts to promote conservation of Minnesota's natural resources.

We strongly encourage the committee to approve these two important pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Forester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "F".

Jeff Forester, E.D. MLR
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Association of Minnesota Counties

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January 25, 2023

Representative Rick Hansen
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF245 (Jordan) - Report on rough fish funding provided, and money appropriated.

Dear Chair Hansen and committee members:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a membership-based organization representing all 87 Minnesota counties, appreciates the opportunity to offer our support of HF245 (Jordan): Report on rough fish.

AMC supports protection of our natural resources and native wildlife. Our membership appreciates that many of our native rough fish populations provide a variety of ecological benefits and are deserving of basic protections. We support the Department of Natural Resources evaluating fish species to determine if there are rough fish species in need regulatory controls to sustain their populations in Minnesota waters.

AMC encourages the committee to support this legislation to further examine protections for native rough fish.

Sincerely,



Brian Martinson, Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties