

Citizen Resolution # 410423



Repeal the commercial fishing law

In 2010 WCC Question 81, about commercial fishing, the DNR stated "... we recognize that it will never be self-supporting, i.e. economically viable, but Wis. Laws of 1977 Act 418 (37) (d) 3, requires (1)"...an economically viable and stable commercial fishery and an active recreational fishery." Since 1992 sport money usage for DNR commercial fishing management and enforcement costs (CFM&EC) has risen from ~33% (\$61,000) to ~90% of total cost. Since 1977 fisheries have not been stable, Lake Michigan commercial perch, chub and smelt harvests have declined 95%, 99.9% and 99.99+% respectively; whitefish by ~43%, all with limits in excess of harvestability, which Stat. 29.519(1m)(b) prohibits. Since 1992 all DNR CFM&EC cost increases, more than commercial license fees have automatically been taken and will be taken from sport license monies, independent of harvest.

Due to depleted fisheries and market forces (fish prices, fishing & DNR employee costs, etc.) going to a contract fishery and/or increasing license fees to cover all commercial fishery expenses is not viable as the netting profits after expenses is ~\$343,000/yr. while DNR CFM&EC are ~\$850,000-\$1,000,000/yr. Also commercials receive for free ~\$2.8 million/yr. (dockside value, down from \$16.3 million AFI in 1987) worth of public fish 'worth 10 times more in economic dollars if left in the lake and targeted by sport fishers, per Dr. Bishop'. The value of native fish like whitefish eating invasive mussels, perch eating spiny water flea, carp and goby is unknown. Increasing the smelt forage should help the sport trout and salmon fisheries and sport netting.

Would you support Legislation Repealing the Wis. law requiring a commercial fishery?

Additional Information provided by author:

(1) <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1977/related/acts/418.pdf> screen 247

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