

## *Aquatic Invasive Species – Comments from Stakeholders*

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March 31, 2011

**To:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Landwehr

**From:** Marilyn Bayerl; Lake Mary Association  
Jim Bedell; Leech Lake Advisory Council  
Bob Berdahl; Potato Lake Association  
Glenn Bowman; Afton Marina & Yacht Club  
Barry Chouinard; Fargo-Moorhead Walleyes Unlimited & Tournament Director Walleye Classic  
Chuck Church; Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations  
Clyde Clement; Brainerd Lakes Area Invasive Species Task Force  
Dan Eigen; Walleyedan  
Susanne Engstrom; Douglas County Lake Association  
Marv Erdman; Whitefish Area Property Owners Association  
Barb Halbakken Fischburg; MN COLA Collaborative  
Jeff Forester; Minnesota Seasonal Recreational Property Owners  
Tera Guetter; Pelican River Watershed District  
Dale A. Gustafson; Sugar Lake Association, Wright County  
Glen Gustafson; Lake and River Alliance of Crow Wing County  
Howard Hansen; Lake Detroiters Association  
Richard D. Hecock; Stakeholder participant representing watershed districts  
Bonnie Huettl; Douglas County COLA  
Susan Kedzie; Invasive Species Coordinator, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
Brian Kirkvold; Lotus Lake Association  
Dan Kittilson; Hubbard Coalition of Lake Associations  
Ann Latham; Green Lake Property Owners Association  
Jerry Lerom; Association of Cass County Lakes  
Harvey and Jane Lillestol; Lake Darling Association  
Eric Lindberg; Environmental Sentry Protection, LLC  
Lois Sinn Lindquist; Chair, Douglas County Citizen's Committee on Zebra Mussels  
Dian Lopez; Ida Lake Association  
Harry May; Lake Geneva Lake Association  
Minnesota COLA Collaborative  
Roger Okerman; Pelican Lake Association (Crow Wing County)  
James Olsen; Meeker County Association of Lakes  
Shawn Olson; Oter Tail County COLA  
Dick Osgood; Lake Minnetonka Association  
Dennis Peterson; County Commissioner Representing the Association of MN Counties  
John Postovit; Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations  
Dick Sternberg; Consulting Fisheries Biologist and Outdoors Author  
Carl Towley; Lake Darling Area Association  
Tim Ward; Lake Mary Association  
Paula West; Mission Lakes Association  
Lisa Whelan; Stakeholder participant - immediate past chair, Lake Minnetonka Conservation District  
Robert Wilson; Chair-AIS Prevention, Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion

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**Re:** DNR AIS Bill - Stakeholder Comments

First of all, thank you for your leadership in the aquatic invasive species issue.

Many of us have been working on this issue for more than a decade, so the recent Governor's/DNR's AIS policy bill and associated funding bills were viewed as a huge step forward.

Now, on review of the proposed Bill we have further concerns, so your offer to meet again is also welcomed. On one hand, we really do support this initiative; but on the other hand, we believe parts can be strengthened to ensure greater success of the effort.

At our last meeting, you said that there probably never would be enough that could be proposed. Given the complicated political, cultural and ecological nature of the AIS 'aquademic' we are aware of the challenge. With this backdrop, we would still like to express some concerns and offer some ways to keep moving forward.

Our overarching concern is a lack of adequate context. When we as stakeholders and others, such as our legislators consider the proposed legislation, we are probably not on the same page with respect to the real threat of AIS and the needs we have to best protect our lakes. The stakeholder process, which underpins much of this proposal, asked the stakeholders what initiatives they would propose to address our collective concerns. The outcome, which in part does reasonably reflect the consensus of the stakeholders, addresses more of 'what we think we should do' rather than a more systematic evaluation of 'what needs to be done.' We believe there is a significant strategic gap between the two approaches.

What nags at us now is the possibility that our legislative leaders may think that by adopting this package, the AIS issues will be solved. If that is the case and if more really needs to be done to protect and restore our lakes, that could affect our strategic position in the future. We certainly do not want to jeopardize this step forward, but at the same time, we believe additional measures are needed.

Here is one example of our concern. In 2011, there is planned to be 4,000 inspection hours on Lake Minnetonka, recognizing it is now a 'superspreader' for zebra mussels. This is a significant increase and is an appropriate priority. However, this represents less than 25% of the public daylight access hours on the lake – in other words, 75% of the access hours will not have an inspection presence. Clearly, the risk of zebra mussels spreading from Lake Minnetonka will remain high despite this improvement.

In our assessment, here are some significant needs:

- Decontamination of all watercraft leaving infested waters with protocols appropriate for all AIS
- Definition of Decontamination - US Fish & Wildlife protocols in the Bill
- Containment of AIS to existing infested waters
- More attention to watercraft entering Minnesota
- More attention to the scheduling and regulation of angling tournaments

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We, as well as many others we are associated with, have also raised related concerns dealing with

- Private/resort access
- Priority on retrofitting public accesses to facilitate/encourage AIS removal
- A sticker-type program
- Proposed fines for violations are not high enough to provide a deterrent

In addition, as Stakeholders included in the proposals to the Legislature, we have concerns related to Implementation of a Prevention Program:

- Partnerships with MN State Parks, Trails (Access BMPs), Fisheries, Tribal Entities, Private Enterprise, Non-Profit Groups, Local Government Units
- Development of Rules to Implement the Program
- The DNR work internally to communicate clear and consistent messages within and among its various divisions

We recognize that great strides have been accomplished in recent months to address Prevention of spread of aquatic invasive species that have the potential to devastate the ecology and fisheries of our lakes.

The concerns included here reflect input from Citizens who have contacted those included in the Stakeholder II process. These recommendations are intended to provide support for DNR and Legislative initiatives that will strengthen efforts in Minnesota for a successful Prevention Program.

Thank you.