



MICHIGAN HOUSE REPUBLICANS

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December 5, 2024

Scott Bowen
Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Department of Natural Resources
525 W Allegan St.
Lansing, MI 48933

Director Bowen,

We are writing to express our opposition to your efforts to boost your bottom line by increasing fees for Michigan residents. As legislators from Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, we represent avid outdoorsmen, and we share their passion for our state's outdoor heritage and protecting our natural resources. Increased fees on hunting and fishing licenses, boat registration, and transitioning from an opt-in to an opt-out on recreation passports will certainly have a serious negative impact on sportsmen and long-term conservation efforts.

Residents across the state have made their voices clear; they are tired of the skyrocketing prices. Attempting to push fee increases and a recreation passport opt-out during a lame-duck legislative session is inherently dishonest to the people you serve. The DNR should expand its sales by providing better products and services to the public. The rationale for the proposed fee schedule offers no further comfort that outdoorsmen will receive better products and services from the department.

The proposed increases require a thorough explanation and public input, which cannot be achieved on a rushed timeline. The limited justification and absence of any quantifiable evidence of outcomes means that we cannot in good conscience authorize fee increases. We especially disapprove of the use of deceptive sales tactics. Hunters and anglers are not just a revenue stream, they are essential for responsible wildlife management. Higher fees will discourage people from purchasing licenses and participating in these outdoor activities, which will lead to lower revenues for the DNR and worse conservation outcomes.

Now more than ever, affordable access to natural spaces is essential for well-being and mental health. Outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, and boating provide residents with an affordable way to enjoy the outdoors, reduce stress, and promote a healthy lifestyle. We urge you to explore alternative funding mechanisms that are honest and do not place the financial burden solely on the shoulders of outdoor enthusiasts. We are confident the DNR can find a balanced approach that upholds Michigan's conservation goals without creating financial barriers for residents.

Sincerely,



Dave Prestin
State Representative
108th District



John Roth
State Representative
104th District



Tom Kunse
State Representative
100th District



Joseph Fox
State Representative
101st District



Mike Hoadley
State Representative
99th District



Cam Cavitt
State Representative
106th District



Greg Markkanen
State Representative
110th District



Ken Borton
State Representative
105th District



Matthew Bierlein
State Representative
97th District



Timmy Beson
State Representative
96th District