



Congressman Dan Kildee: Protecting Michigan's Great Lakes, Rivers and Sport Fishing Industry

The Problem

Michigan's Great Lakes and freshwater, including its \$4 billion sport fishing industry, is currently being threatened by the expansion of commercial fish farming facilities (commonly known as aquaculture).

Right now, a commercial aquaculture facility near Grayling has a state-issued permit, through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, to expand its fish farming operation by 15 times its current size. The expansion will pollute the "Holy Waters" of the Au Sable River, one of Michigan's 16 rivers designated a ["Wild and Scenic River"](#) by the federal government due to its unique ecosystems and pristine scenery.

If commercial aquaculture – whether in lakes, rivers or ponds in Michigan – is not done properly, it has proven in other places to increase pollution, destroy fish habitats, spread disease and introduce non-native species. Certain types of aquaculture, including so-called "flow-through" and "net-pen" fish farming, are especially dangerous if done in the Great Lakes or Michigan's freshwater and they must be stopped. It can increase phosphorus, which causes algal blooms, add formaldehyde and spread whirling disease.

Congressman Kildee's Plan to Protect Michigan's Water and Sport Fishing Industry

Congressman Kildee is introducing legislation to ban the most harmful commercial fish farming practices:

- *The Ban Aquaculture in the Great Lakes Act* would ban aquaculture facilities in the Great Lakes, ending the current patchwork of state laws that attempt to regulate such commercial fishing.
- *The Preserving Fishing on Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* would ban aquaculture facilities on Wild and Scenic Rivers and its tributaries, such as the Au Sable River, unless such facilities are shown not to discharge pollutants into the water.

Michiganders Overwhelming Agree: Don't Jeopardize our Water, Economy

According to a recent poll, an overwhelming majority of Michiganders – 68 percent – oppose aquaculture, or commercial fish farming, in the Great Lakes.

Legislation has previously been introduced in the Michigan State Legislature, including by Republicans, to ban aquaculture in the Great Lakes and in other Michigan waterways.

Congressman Kildee's legislation also has support from the Anglers of the Au Sable, Michigan Trout Unlimited, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Salmon and Steelhead Association and For the Love of Water (FLOW).

Sadly, uncontrolled aquaculture facilities in other states have shown to pollute waterways and destroy local economies. A for-profit commercial fish farm facility in Pennsylvania – in Big Spring Creek, once a famous trout stream – [collapsed the region's fishing industry](#) in the 1970s.

"Like many Michiganders, I have fond memories spending time up north on the lakes or fishing in the river with my family. For everyone in our state, our water is precious, and that's why we have to always protect it from harm. Whether it is invasive species like Asian Carp, the threat of Canadian nuclear waste or commercial fish farming, I will always fight to protect Michigan's freshwater resources and the vital jobs that depend on it."

– Congressman Dan Kildee