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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

November 15, 2017

Bryan and Brenda Roels
P. O. Box 287
Chippewa Lake Lake, Michigan 49320

Dear Lake and Stream Friends:

Over the past weeks the Michigan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) has shared with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the numerous letters of concern MWA has received associated with a concern over the health of our inland public waters.

As you are aware Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have become a significant factor in the health of our lakes. In some cases, AIS infestation has negatively impacted recreational lake use. Many lakefront property owners are appropriately questioning whether the State of Michigan is doing its part to combat AIS. Lakefront property owners see a state that is very good at opening public lake access sites. Lakefront property owners recognize the DNR has been effective in creating and maintaining public access to the public lakes and streams throughout the state. The challenge is to insure that the DNR remains good "neighbors" and to actively collaborate with the property owners and lake users to maintain quality waterways. The DNR is well aware of the need to address AIS and to collaborate with the stakeholders on the prevention and solutions.

It would be a mistake to interpret the concerns of lakefront property owners as an attempt to limit the public's use of the state's lakes and streams. Indeed, most lake owners and lake front property owner associations fully appreciate the importance of the public trust. They support public access, and support a through, engaging planning process.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), manages the state's waterway program. PRD promotes recreational boating on Michigan's lakes and streams by providing public access opportunities. The DNR manages a system of 1,300 boating access sites state-wide, through a restricted waterway funds dedicated to recreational boating.

In recognition of a serious AIS problem, the state has developed a program to address the complex issue of invasive species. The program is referred to as the "Michigan Invasive Species Program". This program is managed collaboratively with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Agriculture (MDARD), and the DNR. Through the program, over \$11 million in grants has been allocated to prevent, detect and manage invasive species.

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The DNR shares the Michigan Waterfront Alliance's (MWA) goal of protecting and restoring lakes and streams, including those affected by AIS. While it is illegal to launch a boat with aquatic weeds connected, the DNR has found that enforcement is clearly a challenge. Public education and enlightening boaters to do their part each time they launch a boat is critical to reducing the transport of aquatic plants. The DNR is committed to identifying strategies to address this enforcement challenge. The DNR will work with the MWA in the planning process as potential new boating access sites are identified as part of the assessment process.

Together we hope to develop effective, new strategies and provide support for successful programs already underway. We will also examine models from other states to insure we are in alignment with best practices.

The action team plans to meet soon to begin mapping out strategies to address the overall mission. Efforts will be made to communicate progress and action steps starting with a robust public education campaign.

Sincerely,



Robert Frye, President
Michigan Waterfront Alliance

Sincerely,



Ron Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division
517-284-6135

cc: Mr. Lon Nordeen, Nordeen Consulting
Natural Resources Commission
Michigan Waterways Commission
Mr. Keith Creagh, Director, DNR
Mr. William O'Neill, Natural Resources Deputy, DNR
Ms. Anna Mooney, Legislative Liaison, DNR