

# Legislative Hearing Talking Points for Aquaculture Plan

## Minnesota Sea Grant

02-07-2022

Good morning and Thank you for the opportunity to testify

- My name is Don Schreiner, Fisheries/Aquaculture Specialist with Minnesota Sea Grant (MNSG).
- For those not familiar with MNSG we are a federal-university partnership program that brings water science to communities. The sea grant network is composed of 34 university based programs along the coastal ocean and great lakes states. Sea Grants mission is to enhance practical use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources in order to maintain a sustainable economy and environment. Sea Grant is part of NOAA, which falls under the Department of Commerce. Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture is one of the 4 main focus areas of Sea Grant.
- Sea grant is not an advocate for aquaculture, but we do fund and develop the science that answers important questions about the economic, social, and environmental concerns that surround aquaculture. Once that information is acquired we work to transfer that science in an unbiased manner to interested stakeholders. MNSG was asked by the MNSA to discuss the need for a revised aquaculture plan for MN and we are not here on behalf of a request by the U of MN.
- AC in MN is composed of the bait industry, fish for stocking, raising fish for food. Conservatively it's about 5 Million 50% bait, 25% each to stocking and food fish.
- In 2017 MNSG hosted a 2 day WS focused on food fish aquaculture with participants from the AC industry, government, and academia. Participants identified one of the 4 major needs was to:
  - Revise the 1989 AC plan for MN
- First plan was a mandate from legislature
  - 1988 - MN Aquaculture Advisory Comm. was formed representing 9 state agencies
  - 1989 – Consultant hired to write plan with input and oversight from the advisory committee. That still stands today – obsolete.
  - 2008 – MNDNR provided a policy update on use of public wetlands for aquaculture
  - 2011 – MNDNR developed a best management practices for aquaculture
    - AIS, water quality, wild fish stocks, environmental issues
- Why Now?
  - It's been 32 years since last inclusive plan – all agencies

- Food systems are evolving - Demand for locally grown food - COVID disrupted supply chains
- Aquaculture expanding rapidly, fastest growing type of agriculture. Food fish – new technologies
- Bait availability continues as an issue in Minnesota
- There is renewed interest in AC in Minnesota and GLs states
- **IF citizens and legislators want to move forward with aquaculture in the state, we strongly believe a revised plan is necessary.**
- What is the Value of an Aquaculture Plan?
  - AC is controversial – as is everything.....
  - In my experience - Plans have 2 phases
- First phase - Process – builds relationships
  - Process provides a forum for communication among all stakeholders
  - Serves as an education component – shared perspectives among folks - different values, wants, needs.
- Second - The plan itself – documents decisions/agreements
  - Minimizes “brush fires” by dealing with controversial issues up front
    - Plan would address AC impacts on public waters, natural fish stocks, other environmental concerns along with industry needs
  - A Plan documents common understanding of how decisions made
    - Active plans provide criteria where some predetermined action will occur
- Lastly a plan serves as a guide or road map on how aquaculture in the state will proceed for a given period of time (10 years?).
- Happy to answer Qs or discuss more on what MNSG is doing in the Q&A session

Thank you for your attention.