



March 20, 2025

Minnesota House

Attn: Chair Peter Fischer and Co—Chair Josh Heintzeman

Room G—3 Capitol Building

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Saint Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Support H.F. 1527 – Fishing in the Neighborhood Program

Dear Chair Fischer, Co—Chair Heintzeman, and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), the Marine Retailers of the Americas Association (MRAA), and the Watersports Industry Association (WSIA), I am writing to express our collective support for H.F. 1527. This bill proposes the allocation of \$200,000 from the Game and Fish Fund for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The funds will be used to expand the "Fishing in the Neighborhood" program, bringing more opportunities to counties and cities across Minnesota. By dedicating this funding, the bill demonstrates a clear commitment to increasing public participation in outdoor activities, which is crucial for the continued growth and success of the marine and boating industries.

NMMA is the leading trade association representing the recreational boating industry in North America. It is dedicated to industry growth by promoting product quality assurance, the boating lifestyle, public policy advocacy, market statistics, and research. NMMA member companies produce more than 80 percent of the boats, engines, trailers, accessories, and gear used by boaters and anglers throughout the US and Canada.

WSIA serves as the primary advocate for the towed watersports industry, striving to strengthen and grow boating while protecting the interests of its member companies and recreational boaters. WSIA works to develop best practices, preserve waterway access, educate participants, and promote safety, particularly in towed watersports activities. With over 440 member companies, WSIA represents a diverse range of stakeholders, including manufacturers of boats, marine engines, accessories, and marine dealers.

MRAA is the leading trade association for North American small businesses involved in selling and servicing new and used recreational boats, as well as operating marinas, boatyards, and accessory stores.

Expanding fishing opportunities in communities throughout Minnesota will lead to increased participation in recreational fishing, which in turn will provide a boost to local economies. As more people engage in fishing activities, demand for fishing gear, boats, and related supplies will naturally rise. This increase in consumer activity will benefit local businesses, particularly those that cater to the fishing and boating communities. The marine industry plays a vital role in supporting local economies, and the expanded access to fishing will likely enhance this economic contribution.

In addition to economic benefits, the bill's focus on public awareness and environmental stewardship is critical. By promoting sustainable fishing practices and responsible resource management, H.F. No. 1527 supports the preservation of Minnesota's aquatic ecosystems for future generations. Sustainable fishing practices will not only ensure the health of local fish populations but will also safeguard the broader environment, benefiting all who depend on these resources for recreation and livelihood. For the marine industry, the long-term health of these ecosystems is paramount, as it ensures the continued availability of high-quality fishing experiences for anglers in Minnesota.

The economic and environmental benefits of this bill are further amplified by its potential to stimulate tourism in Minnesota. As the program expands and draws more people into the state's outdoor recreation opportunities, we expect to see an increase in visitors who travel to the state specifically for fishing and boating. This will not only generate new revenue for local businesses but will also showcase Minnesota as a prime destination for recreational fishing, further strengthening the state's marine industry.

In conclusion, the undersigned marine industry organizations strongly support the passage of H.F. No. 1527. This bill will have a lasting positive impact on the recreational fishing and boating industries by expanding angling opportunities, promoting environmental stewardship, and stimulating economic growth. It represents a forward-looking investment in Minnesota's outdoor legacy, ensuring the state remains a premier destination for anglers while fostering local economies and supporting conservation efforts. We look forward to productive discussions surrounding this important legislation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact [jmcardell@nmma.org](mailto:jmcardell@nmma.org).

Sincerely,

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