



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

February 20, 2025

Chair Heintzeman and Members of the House Environment Committee:

Conservation Minnesota writes to you in general support of the three bills in front of the committee today: HF276 (Nash), HF411 (Myers), and HF413 (Franson). As an advocate for helping Minnesotans enjoy our great outdoors, we believe bills like these are significant to getting more people of all ages to enjoy Minnesota's natural resources.

Fishing, like so many other recreational activities in our state, knows no age limits, and can be enjoyed for a lifetime. The bills before you make it easier for older Minnesotans to utilize this lifelong skill by eliminating financial barriers. Allowing Minnesotans over the age of 65 to obtain angling licenses at a reduced cost both rewards lifelong anglers and enables older residents to more easily explore a new hobby outdoors. Older Minnesotans often live on fixed incomes, especially once they retire from the workforce, and none should be cut out from a quintessential Minnesotan activity.

There is one point we would like to highlight for the committee; licenses are an important revenue source for the DNR, and that revenue is used to maintain and manage fish and wildlife populations. DNR funding has remained a mere fraction of the total state budget for many years, and we believe that on top of proposals like these, the committee ought to consider ways to spend more on our environment, natural resources and outdoor recreation. While DNR is always evaluating its long-term funding plans, we believe that any funds lost by the Department because of these bills need to be replaced to allow them to continue their work and make them whole (which HF276(Nash) notably does).

In summary, Conservation Minnesota supports legislation that encourages more Minnesotans to enjoy our great outdoors. Bills like HF276 (Nash), HF411 (Myers), and HF413 (Franson), all get at this issue, and we appreciate the work of all three authors in helping Minnesotans get out, cast a line, and enjoy Minnesota's wonderful lakes and rivers.

Sincerely,

Nels Paulsen

Policy Director

nels@conservationminnesota.org

James Lehner

Policy Associate

james@conservationminnesota.org