



March 5, 2026

Representative Mary Franson, GOP Co-Chair  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Fue Lee, DFL Co-Chair  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Franson and Chair Lee,

MN-FISH is a statewide organization formed in 2018 to represent the fishing interests of anglers, clubs, local organizations, and industry stakeholders. MN-FISH provides anglers and outdoor recreation supporters the opportunity to have a voice and be heard at the State Capitol.

On behalf of our members across Minnesota, we write in support of the Governor's bonding recommendations, specifically \$3 million for Betterment of Buildings, at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), including predesign and design of a new metro fish hatchery. This investment will build on the significant general fund and capital investments made in 2023 through the DNR's Get Out MORE Initiative.

Minnesota's fish hatchery system plays a foundational role in sustaining healthy fisheries. The current St. Paul hatchery is the only fish hatchery serving Minnesota's seven-county metro area, where a growing share of the state's population lives and where many new anglers are introduced to fishing. Like much of the hatchery system, the metro facility is aging and was built decades ago. Strategic reinvestment is necessary to ensure reliable fish production, modern biosecurity standards, and operational efficiency.

In the fall of 2025, members of the Legislature had the opportunity to tour the St. Paul fish hatchery and see firsthand the significant infrastructure challenges facing the facility. Aging buildings, outdated systems, and deferred maintenance make it increasingly difficult to operate efficiently and meet the needs of a growing metro population. Those site visits underscored why long-term modernization is not simply a preference, but a necessity.

Investing in modern hatchery infrastructure will:

- Improve long-term sustainability of Minnesota's fish stocking system
- Increase energy efficiency and operational reliability
- Strengthen the state's ability to respond to aquatic invasive species

- Support urban angling opportunities in the seven-county metro region

Outdoor recreation is a vital part of Minnesota's economy, generating \$6.9 billion annually and supporting more than 25,000 jobs and 700 businesses statewide. A strong and modern hatchery system directly supports this economic engine by sustaining fish populations that drive angling participation, tourism, and local business activity.

MN-FISH has consistently advocated for new investments in fish hatcheries, public water accesses, fishing piers, and shore fishing facilities. The Governor's recommendation to prioritize the predesign and design of a new metro fish hatchery reflects the importance of ensuring that Minnesota's fisheries infrastructure keeps pace with demand and remains safe, efficient, and effective.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to support Governor Walz's bonding recommendation and advance funding for the new metro fish hatchery this session.

Thank you for your continued leadership in supporting Minnesota's outdoor heritage and fisheries resources.

Sincerely,

Dave Osborne

MN-FISH Board of Directors