



MN-FISH
SPORTFISHING
FOUNDATION & COALITION

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Press Release

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Position Statement & Open Letter to Governor Walz from MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation - COVID-19 Pandemic

WALKER, MN – The MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation today released its official Position Statement on the current COVID-19 pandemic. It also shared its open letter to Governor Walz outlining specific recommendations, as the state prepares for the 2020 Fishing Season that opens May 9th.

The position statement reads:

“The MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation believes recreational fishing is culturally important to Minnesota’s heritage and is an inherently safe and healthy activity that is also an important food source for many Minnesotans. MN-FISH strongly encourages state and local leaders to not only maintain traditional statewide fishing opportunities, but also designate the \$4.2 billion sportfishing and marine industries as essential, and allow supportive businesses to open, such as sporting goods stores and fishing guide services that can operate within established safe social distancing guidelines.”

Here’s the letter MN-FISH has sent to Governor Walz:

Honorable Governor Walz:

The MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation thanks you for your efforts to defeat COVID-19, while recognizing recreational fishing/boating are both culturally important to Minnesotans and vital to the state’s economy.

MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation represents Minnesota’s 1.4 million anglers and supportive businesses generating \$4.2 billion annually in economic impact in our state.

We are the “State-of-Fishing”.

Our association is ready to work with you and other local, state and federal elected officials to help end this pandemic and rebuild Minnesota’s economy.

Restore, Protect and Enhance Minnesota Sport Fishing

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We recommend the following:

- **Support statewide travel for anglers and boaters.** Recreational fishing and boating are critical to the economic health of the state, particularly in rural locations, as every week lost during the vital spring/summer fishing season is financially devastating to these businesses. Supporting statewide travel will help businesses survive; it will also reduce crowding on boat ramps and lakes in populated areas across the state.
- **Encourage Anglers to Purchase Fishing Licenses and Walleye Stamps Online or by Phone.** This will reduce lines at traditional license vendors to make transactions safer for all. Licenses are available through DNR website or by calling 1-MN-LICENSE.
- **Promote May 9-10 as Take Mom Fishing Free Weekend.** Celebrate Mother's Day as only Minnesotans can – by going fishing for FREE (no fishing license is required for Minnesota resident moms)! Consider expanding this program next year for health care workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 fight as well.
- **Go Fishing on Opening Day of Fishing Season.** Help state residents celebrate the Fishing Season Opener by fishing yourself that day.
- **Allow Fishing Guides/Charter Services to Reopen.** Most state guide businesses are sole proprietors that cater to individuals or groups of 1-3. Guides can operate within established safe social distancing guidelines by limiting number of guests allowed on board. The same is true for charter operations that generally operate in larger craft.

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About MN-FISH: The MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization of anglers and fishing industry stakeholders formed to bring a strong, unified voice to St. Paul on behalf of Minnesota anglers and stakeholders. The organization is dedicated to restoring, protecting and enhancing Minnesota Sportfishing for present and future generations of anglers to enjoy.

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