



## State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Scott Hassett, Secretary

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June 11, 2004

The Honorable Steve Kestell  
Member of Assembly  
Room 17 West  
State Capitol

Dear Representative Kestell:

On May 25 you wrote to Natural Resources Board Chairman Gerald O'Brien on behalf of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Yellow Perch Conservation Groups, which has requested a longer open season for yellow perch. From other correspondence I am aware that the organization has also requested the initiation of stocking of yellow perch. This letter is to let you know how the Department is approaching those issues.

The Department has prepared a "Green Sheet" (enclosed) for the Natural Resources Board describing the requested rule change and providing background information. Although the Department does not support taking the proposed rule change to hearings, we have placed the issue on the NRB's June 23 agenda. This gives the NRB the opportunity to formally approve public hearings on the proposed rule change, if it wishes to do so.

The current rules are well supported in the sport fishing community. The changes that resulted in our current rules were included in the 2002 Spring Hearings, where they were supported by 4,770 and opposed by only 608. The Great Lakes Study Committee of the Conservation Congress, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishing Clubs, and the Lakeshore Fishermen Sports Club, LTD of Milwaukee continue to endorse the current rules.

The issue of stocking yellow perch has been raised many times over the years. Although yellow perch have been released into Lake Michigan in the past, there has never been a meaningful stocking program. That is because our biologists and their colleagues in adjoining states believe it would not be helpful, might do harm, and would be very costly. Yellow perch are rebounding in Green Bay without the help of stocking, and we believe that they should be allowed to do so in Lake Michigan as well.

Thank you for your interest in our Lake Michigan fisheries program. If you or your staff would like further information about yellow perch in Lake Michigan, please feel free to contact our Great Lakes Fisheries Specialist, Bill Horns, at 608-266-8782 or [hornsw@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:hornsw@dnr.state.wi.us).

Sincerely,

Scott Hassett  
Secretary

Enc.

cc: Natural Resources Board  
Mike Staggs, Steve Hewett, Bill Horns – FH/3  
Brad Eggold – SER/GLRF