

Chair Founq Hawj  
MN Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy  
1150 Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Ave W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

SF 4898- Support for Native Fish Bill

Dear Chair Sen Hawj and committee members-

My name is John Mertz and I am a lifelong Minnesota resident and angler. I strongly support additional protections for Native Fish proposed under SF4898. There is a pervasive and mistaken belief in our society that these fish are less valuable and indeed even harmful to our ecosystems! This is completely wrong and we must amend our statutes so that they no longer promote those mistaken beliefs.

As an avid angler, I have bought a license every year since turning 16 and plan to do so for life. I fish from a boat and from shore in the “soft water” season, I like ice fishing, and my favorite is darkhouse spearfishing. I enjoy fishing for many game fish species, but I also really enjoy pursuing native rough fish like bowfin, gar, and freshwater drum. It’s fun to come across species that are new to me... despite the fact that many of them are the farthest thing from “new”! Gar and bowfin have been swimming around since before T Rex walked this earth!

While I enjoy fishing for these fish, their role in our ecosystems and their longevity in this habitat prove their value independent of human perceptions of them. So let’s honor their presence in our State with the really basic updates in SF4898: to stop calling them trash fish and treating them the same.

Thank you for protecting our native fish.

Sincerely, John Mertz