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**Congressman Dan Kildee Introduces Legislation to Protect the Great Lakes,
Michigan's Sport Fishing Industry**

*Kildee Seeks to Address For-Profit Fish Farming that Poses New Threats to
Michigan's Waterways, including the Au Sable River*

FENTON – Congressman Dan Kildee (MI-05), flanked by sports fishermen and conservationists at Red Fox Outfitters in Fenton, today announced that he has introduced new legislation in Congress to ban harmful aquaculture practices in both the Great Lakes and federally designated “Wild and Scenic Rivers,” which includes the Au Sable River. The new bills are part of Congressman Kildee’s continued efforts to protect the Great Lakes and Michigan’s rivers from pollution, disease and invasive species.

Aquaculture is the commercial raising of fish in ponds, rivers or lakes. If not done correctly, it has been shown to increase pollution, destroy sensitive fish habitats, spread disease and introduce non-native species. Sadly, other states have seen polluted waterways that have crippled local economies as a result of bad aquaculture practices. A commercial fish farm facility in Pennsylvania on Big Spring Creek – once a famous trout stream – [collapsed the region's fishing industry](#) in the 1970s.

“Like many Michiganders, I have fond memories spending time up north on the lakes or fishing in the river with my family. For everyone in our state, our water is precious, and that’s why we have to always protect it from harm. Whether it is invasive species like Asian Carp, Canada’s plan to store nuclear waste on the shore of the Great Lakes or commercial fish farming, I will always fight to protect Michigan’s freshwater and the vital jobs that depend on it,” said Congressman Kildee.

Currently, a commercial aquaculture facility near Grayling has a state-issued permit, through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, to expand its fish farming operation by 15 times its current size. The expansion will pollute the “Holy Waters” of the Au Sable River, one of Michigan’s 16 rivers designated a [“Wild and Scenic River”](#) by the federal government based on its unique ecosystems and pristine scenery.

Congressman Kildee’s two bills include:

- *The Ban Aquaculture in the Great Lakes Act*, which would ban aquaculture facilities in the Great Lakes, ending the current patchwork of state laws that attempt to regulate such commercial fishing.
- *The Preserving Fishing on Wild and Scenic Rivers Act*, which would ban aquaculture facilities on Wild and Scenic Rivers and its tributaries, such as the Au Sable River, unless such facilities are shown not to discharge pollutants into the river.

Banning aquaculture has support from a vast majority of Michiganders, as well as lawmakers and conservation groups. According to a [recent poll](#), 68 percent of Michiganders oppose aquaculture in the Great Lakes. Additionally, this issue is not a partisan one; Republicans in the Michigan Legislature have previously introduced legislation to ban aquaculture in the Great Lakes and in Michigan waterways.

Congressman Kildee's legislation also has support from the Anglers of the Au Sable, Michigan Trout Unlimited, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Salmon and Steelhead Association and For the Love of Water (FLOW).

"Anglers of the Au Sable applauds Congressman Kildee for addressing an overlooked Great Lakes water issue, the introduction of pollutants by fish farms into the Lakes and connecting waterways," said Tom Baird, president of the organization that focuses on improving fishing on the Au Sable River. "It is vital that fish farms be operated in a way that protects the cleanliness of our rivers and lakes, which are in a delicate balance easily tipped by addition of wastes from aquaculture done improperly. Flow through systems that use rivers as virtually open sewers are of particular concern to those of us who fish for trout, which need clean, cold water to thrive. This legislation would ensure only properly regulated fish farms which don't pollute are allowed on designated rivers."

"The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association is one of the largest sport fishing organizations in the Great Lakes Basin. Our mission is to protect, promote and enhance sport fishing in the Great Lakes and connecting water ways. We are proud to support legislation to prohibit aquaculture in the Great Lakes and to prohibit aquaculture operations that contribute to pollution of wild and scenic rivers," said Dennis Eade, Executive Director of the Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association.

"We appreciate Congressman Kildee's leadership on this very important sportsmen's issue. Aquaculture facilities across the globe that are connected to public water bodies have proven to be disastrous for water quality and fish health. Our \$4 billion fishery in Michigan drives local economies, creates jobs, and connects millions of Michigan citizens to our long and storied heritage as the premier fishing destination in North America," said Michigan United Conservation Club.

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