

May 19, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg
2266 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sarah Elfreth
1213 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026

Dear Representatives Walberg and Elfreth,

The undersigned organizations thank you for your leadership in introducing the Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026. We write to express our strong support for this legislation to modernize federal aquatic invasive species (AIS) policy and strengthen efforts to prevent, control and eradicate AIS. The AIS Control and Prevention Act represents the most comprehensive modernization of federal aquatic invasive species policy in decades, improving coordination across agencies and states, strengthening prevention and rapid response efforts, and providing long-overdue tools to support effective management.

As organizations representing recreational anglers, boaters, and the industries they support, we understand firsthand the challenges posed by AIS. In the Great Lakes, AIS like sea lamprey have substantial impacts on recreational fisheries, as each sea lamprey can consume or affect up to 40 pounds of fish like salmon, steelhead and lake trout. In the Chesapeake, invasive blue catfish consume and outcompete species like striped bass and white perch, affecting recreational fishing opportunities throughout the region.

The AIS Control and Prevention Act builds on the findings of the Aquatic Invasive Species Commission, convened by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and outdoor recreation partners. Bringing together anglers, boaters, scientists, state fish and wildlife agencies and industry leaders, the Commission in 2023 published a comprehensive set of recommendations to enhance federal AIS policy.

The Commission's report highlighted the need to modernize federal law and policy like the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (NANPCA) and enhance collaboration between state, federal, and regional agencies. The report also emphasized maintaining recreational access and supporting state-led AIS management through strategic investments in prevention, rapid response, and research. The AIS Control and Prevention Act would enhance coordination among federal and state agencies working on shared AIS challenges, ensuring the best available science informs sound, effective management. Increased support for the implementation of state management plans would enhance on-the-water projects

to prevent, control and eradicate AIS. Leveraging the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force to enhance rapid response activities will help state and federal managers quickly contain and address AIS outbreaks before they become costly management issues. Finally, investments in research, technology development and monitoring will enhance states' abilities to effectively manage new and existing AIS challenges.

Beyond keeping fisheries and aquatic ecosystems healthy and accessible, enhanced federal AIS policy would support the significant economic impacts generated by recreational fishing and boating. Nationwide, fishing and boating generate \$230 billion in economic activity and over 1.1 million jobs. In addition, this legislation would minimize damage caused by AIS to critical infrastructure, including irrigation, hydropower, drinking water and other water infrastructure.

On behalf of anglers, boaters, and the industries they support, we thank you for your leadership of this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Catfishing Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS)
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Guy Harvey Ocean Fund
Izaak Walton League of America
Major League Fishing
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wildlife Forever