



December 5, 2006

Mr. Keith Charters, NRC Chairman  
Mr. Frank Wheatlake, NRC License Fee Working Group Chairman  
Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 30028, 530 W. Allegan  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Chairman Charters and Commissioner Wheatlake:

On March 3, 2006, the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) wrote you in support of the work Commissioner Wheatlake and the license fee working group were developing on possible license fee increases. The working group had preliminarily determined that the DNR needed significant fee increases to restore lost positions and generate sufficient revenue to support DNR wildlife and other managed programs. In particular, we were supportive of efforts to restore wildlife biologist and conservation officer positions to levels that would provide higher levels of deer management research and law enforcement services to the public.

We are writing today to reaffirm our support for your proposal. While we understand that some individual hunters will oppose these license fee increases, the Michigan state chapter of QDMA believes the increases are in line with license costs in other states and are required to give Michigan citizens the proper protection and oversight of its wildlife resources.

As you know, QDMA has a membership of over 40,000 members and we have over 3,000 wildlife and natural resource professionals in our ranks. Our mission is to promote sustainable, high-quality, white-tailed deer populations, wildlife habitats and ethical hunting experiences through education, research, and management in partnership with hunters, landowners, natural resource professionals and the public.

From our monitoring and participation over the last year, we know that the report put together by the fee working group is very comprehensive and very convincing. What it demonstrates is that years ago, Michigan's Game and Fish programs were largely supported by the state's General Fund. Gradually over time, the General Fund has provided less and less of the total funds needed to manage essential DNR programs. In its place, user fees in the form of license fees today provide the bulk of the funding. Because license fees have not kept pace with inflation, however, essential fish and game programs have been repeatedly cut back. This lack of adequate funding amounts to a disservice to the natural resources, to the hunters and fishermen, and to all citizens of our fair state.

The trend that has been established is based on increased reliance on user fees. Overall, the users in Michigan (hunters and fishermen) generally have not objected to license fee increases if the resources are properly managed. The Michigan state chapter of QDMA believes that the final report of the working group demonstrates the staffing and management program dollar requirements to provide proper management.

Chairman Charters and Commissioner Wheatlake

December 5, 2006

Page 2

Furthermore, we believe this current funding proposal will only solve your funding challenges for the next three to five years. In the long run, Michigan should provide a means for more secure funding of these essential natural resource management programs and we look forward to working with you, the legislature and the Governor to choose the best long-term funding methods. In the short term, we strongly support the recommendations as set forth by the fee working group.

Yours truly,

Leon E. Hank, President  
QDMA, Michigan Chapter  
4649 Crampton Way  
Holt, MI 48842  
517-699-2393

Kip Adams, REACH Director  
QDMA National Office  
P.O. Box 160  
Bogart, Georgia 30622  
800-209-3337

cc: QDMA State Chapter Board of Directors  
Brian Murphy, QDMA Executive Director  
Rebecca Humphries, DNR Director  
William Moritz, DNR Wildlife Director