

**Chair James Spillane and Members of the  
House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee**

Legislative Office Building, Room 307  
33 North State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

**Subject: Strong Support for HB720-FN on Live Freshwater Baitfish Imports**

Dear Chairman Spillane and Esteemed Members of the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee,

The undersigned organization urgently supports HB720-FN, legislation prohibiting the importation of live freshwater baitfish into New Hampshire. This proposal, which includes strict border controls and penalties for violations, is a critical and time-sensitive step toward protecting the state's aquatic habitats from invasive species and pathogens while ensuring that recreational fishing remains a safe and responsible pastime for everyone.

Live baitfish from other regions can introduce non-native species, pathogens, and harmful microorganisms into local waters. For instance, the introduction of the zebra mussel in the Great Lakes caused significant ecological and economic damage. Because many baitfish look similar, it can be difficult to distinguish native species from non-native ones. Studies in other areas suggest that many people release leftover baitfish into the wild, increasing the risk of accidental introductions. Once established, invasive species are notoriously difficult and costly to manage.

Several states - Maine, Idaho, Minnesota, Utah, Washington, Alaska, and Oregon - have banned live baitfish imports to minimize these risks. Preventing a problem at the source is far more effective than attempting to remove an invasive population later.

We understand that this legislation may have implications for the baitfish industry and for anglers who rely on live bait. However, we believe that the potential benefits in terms of protecting our ecosystems and preserving recreational fishing far outweigh these concerns. We urge you to support and advance HB720-FN, which bans the importation of live freshwater baitfish in New Hampshire. Doing so will protect the state's freshwater ecosystems from preventable threats, preserve recreational fishing opportunities, and encourage local or alternative bait use, ushering in a new era of responsible fishing practices. Failure to pass this legislation could lead to irreversible damage to our aquatic ecosystems and the loss of recreational fishing as we know it.

We understand the weight of your responsibility in this matter, and we sincerely thank you for considering this important issue.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations

**Signatories:**

Amanda Hansen, President  
Upstream Policies



Lynn Wittman, President  
Kezar Lake Protective Association  
PO Box 141  
North Sutton, NH 03260



Julie Brown, Executive Director  
Wentworth Watershed Association  
51 Mill St Building 3 Unit D  
Wolfeboro, NH 03894



Kathleen Sciarappa, President  
Mirror Lake Protective Association  
PO Box 311  
Mirror Lake, NH 03853



Suzanne Graves, President  
Perkins Pond Protective Association  
PO Box 123  
Sunapee, NH 03782



James Falls, President  
Millville Lake Protective Association  
PO Box 292  
North Salem, NH 03073



Michael Riese, President  
Goose Pond Lake Association  
PO Box 647  
Enfield, NH 03748

Amy McGregor-Radin, President  
Thorndike Pond Conservation Association  
PO Box 595  
Jaffrey, NH 03452

Philip DeConinck, President  
Kolelemook Lake Protective Association  
PO Box 215  
Springfield, NH 03284