Dear Honorable (name of state legislator):

I am writing to encourage you and the rest of the Minnesota state legislature to take immediate and forceful action, in conjunction with the Minnesota DNR, to more aggressively combat the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). These invaders are destroying Minnesota’s $ 4.8 billion sport fishing industry and $11.3 billion tourist industry. Eurasian water milfoil is reported to decrease lake shore property values by over 16% so AIS has a real and negative economic affect on our local community. If not stopped on a state wide basis, AIS will destroy our fishing and tourism industries as well as continue to negatively impact property values.

The state’s current approach to AIS control is inadequate, as evidenced by new lakes and streams being declared AIS-infested on almost a weekly basis. With Minnesota’s 3000+ public access lakes, the DNR’s 125 watercraft inspectors simply cannot keep up with the problem. To cover all these lakes, there are only 20 AIS decontamination units state-wide!

We need your immediate help, as the next boating and fishing season is only a few months away. The following four actions need to be taken this year by the legislature and implemented by the DNR:

1. Improve AIS inspection of all watercraft by allowing mandatory inspection of all boats entering a water body by DNR-trained inspectors, and give the inspectors authority to turn away boats contaminated with AIS.
2. Improve access to AIS decontamination by authorizing DNR-approved regional or local decontamination facilities, run by local government units (LGUs), lake associations, or by private individuals.
3. Put teeth in the AIS laws and regulations by dramatically increasing random road side watercraft inspections and much larger fines for boaters found to be transporting AIS.
4. Significantly increase AIS-related funding both to the DNR and through the DNR to LGUs for the purposes of inspection, decontamination and public awareness.

I look forward to your support on this critical issue to protect Minnesota’s valuable fishing and tourist industries and the property values of our lakeshore owners.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Address]
[Date]