

m DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Fish and Wildlife
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4020

April 12, 2019

Donald R. Schreiner, Fisheries Specialist
Minnesota Sea Grant
138 Chester Park Bldg.
31 West College Street, Duluth, MN 55812

Dear Mr. Schreiner,

This letter is in support of Sea Grant's LCCMR proposal *Increase Golden Shiner Production to Protect Aquatic Communities*. Golden Shiner are a baitfish in high demand by Minnesota anglers. Unfortunately, the in-state supply of Golden Shiner in most years does not meet the demand, and some anglers and bait dealers have asked to allow importation of Golden Shiner from other states. Present laws do not allow importation of baitfish to prevent the introduction of invasive species and fish diseases.

The recent report to the Minnesota Legislature titled "Minnow Importation Risk Report: assessing the risk of importing Golden Shiners into Minnesota from Arkansas" (Gunderson 2018) identified several key vulnerabilities and risks associated with importing Golden Shiner. The report recommends increasing production of Golden Shiner in Minnesota as a preferred alternative to importation. This conclusion was endorsed by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Tom Landwehr in a February 2018 letter to legislators (included in Gunderson 2018).

Sean Sisler, MNDNR Fisheries Commercial Programs and Fish Health Consultant, will provide 40 hours of in-kind support of this project for each of three years, for a value of \$6,000. Sean will process needed permits, attend meetings with project partners to provide Department perspective, and provide review of the analyses.

This proposal explores a number of strategies to increase production of Golden Shiner within the state which could reduce the need for importation. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources welcomes the opportunity to be involved in a project that has great promise for producing actionable science for our management agency and the anglers of Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Grant Wilson
Acting Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife