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## Stop Zebra Mussels and Other Invasive Pests from Infesting Your Lake!

Together we have made remarkable progress protecting our lakes from Aquatic Invasive Species, AIS. During the 2010 Legislative Session, there was no state organization pushing AIS legislation at the Capitol.

Last fall, as zebra mussels were found in Mille Lacs, Minnetonka, Prior and Pelee Lake, MSRPO members started writing in with increasing concern. MSRPO responded. At the 2010 MSRPO Annual Meeting, with gubernatorial candidates present, Executive Director Jeff Forester gave an eye-popping [presentation on Zebra Mussels](#). He announced that MSRPO was going to seek legislation to stop the spread of AIS in Minnesota.

In January, Jeff Forester published a [commentary in the Star Tribune](#) and issued a clarion call to stop zebra mussels, writing, "The Land of Ten Thousand Lakes must stand and win this war."

**On Wednesday, Gov. Dayton Announced His Plan to STOP AIS IN MINNESOTA**



Photo Courtesy Deb Rose, DNR

What a difference a year makes. Last fall we seemed a very long way from having a good plan introduced in the legislature -- and during a March 16 press conference Governor Dayton rolled out a statewide AIS containment proposal -- bills numbers [847/HF 1162](#). The DNR has also put up a [Policy Fact Sheet](#) that outlines the details of the proposed program and a [Budget Fact Sheet](#).

This [Star Tribune article](#) has more information.

We must pull together to make this plan a reality.



Photo Courtesy Deb Rose, DNR

MSRPO members are a grass roots powerhouse -- when we act together, write our legislators and make our voices heard, we succeed.

This proposal is good, and Commissioner Landwehr invited us to work with him to make it better. But first, we must work to secure funding to protect the lakes from the advance of Aquatic Invasive Species.

The proposal funds long-term and ongoing AIS work by increasing the AIS surcharge on a three year watercraft licenses -- from about \$5 for three years to about \$15 spread over three years for an average sized boat. This modest increase, about the cost of one Happy Meal a year, will generate about \$4 million a year in ongoing funding for AIS mitigation and containment.

Later that day, the MSRPO board recognized that through Lake Improvement Districts and other private funds, lake shore owners already spend more than two million in AIS mitigation and containment. Lake shore owners are also the most active in the AIS fight -- we understand the threat and so have been leading the charge. Lake shore owners should not be asked to bear the cost alone.

**Check out our blog**

We want to hear from you. Please leave a [comment](#).

In addition to the surcharge, the legislature is also considering appropriating \$10 million of dollars from lottery revenues and money raised by the 3/8ths of a cent Outdoor Heritage sales tax voted into law by Minnesotans in 2008.

In order to be successful, we need:

- 1) A one-time infusion of money to get a workable and complete plan off the ground for this open water season.
- 2) An ongoing source of funds to do AIS work into the future.

Aquatic Invasive Species will not go away. We must make the necessary investments now to stop their spread and continue our vigilance into the future.

Some in the Republican caucus are hesitant to raise any fees, believing it would be a violation of campaign promises. There are others who do understand that zebra mussels represent a crisis, and ongoing funding is needed. We need to give them legislators support as they champion our cause in their caucus. Your legislators need to hear from you today that ***we see the AIS surcharge increase not as a tax increase, but as an investment in our waters.***

**If you want to stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, send the message below to your state Representative and Senator.**

It is best, if you have the time, to rework the email in your own words and ask your legislators to support both SF 847/HF1162, the AIS surcharge and other one-time monies to stop AIS spread in Minnesota.

This is crunch time -- we are poised to have a good framework in place to prevent the spread of AIS *this season*. So please write your legislator. Forward this email to your friends and neighbors and family. Please get it out to your lake associations and ask them to write their legislators as well.

Thank your legislator for supporting AIS funding, policy and the surcharge increase. The Governor, many members of the Legislature and DNR have stepped up, and we really need to give them our support. MSRPO is working for you. We need your support to win this fight. Resources are stretched thin as we work to stop zebra mussels, Asian carp and other destructive species from reaching your lake. [Join MSRPO today](#) so we can continue this work.

**GET INFORMED! GET ACTIVE! GET RESULTS!**

**[CLICK HERE: Ask your legislators to help.](#)**

If your legislators' name and e-mail addresses are blank, it is because we do not have your Minnesota address information (where you live) or because you are not a Minnesota resident. Please e-mail us your street address, city, and zip and we will be able to include your legislators' information in the future.

Thank you for your passion and activism. Please keep in touch.



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