

Legislative Subcommittee on Water Policy 10 24 24: KEEP IT CLEAN COALITION PRESENTATION

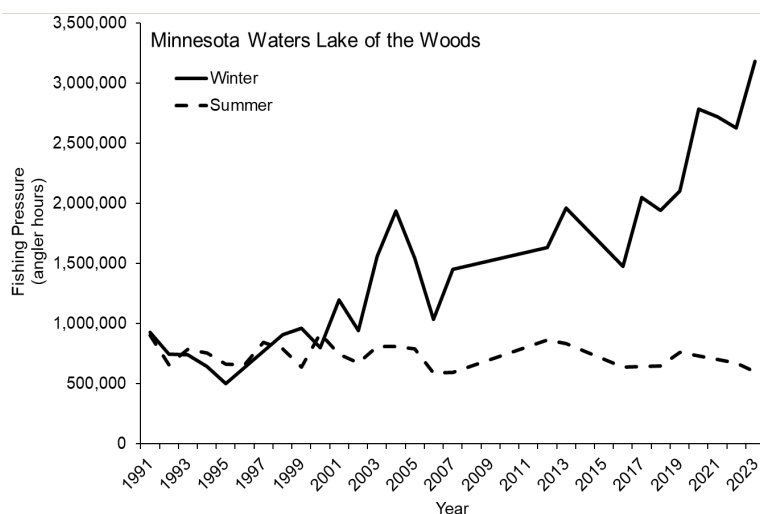
Thank you, Mr. Stark and subcommittee members, for your time and attention today. My name is Robyn Dwight. I am the President of the Upper Red Lake Area Association, here this afternoon on behalf of the **KEEP IT CLEAN** Coalition.

*"Every winter, hundreds of thousands of anglers head for the frozen water to fish. Most ice anglers clean up after themselves, but some **don't** — and it's their behavior that was the impetus for a new litter-on-ice law the Minnesota Legislature passed earlier this year."* - [2023: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#)

The **KEEP IT CLEAN** Coalition is the driving force behind "[Clean Ice](#)" legislation, prohibiting the placement of garbage and human waste on or under the ice of state waters, with a \$100 fine for offenders, as the critical first part of protecting Minnesota's ice-covered waters from the leftovers of human activity. But more must be done.

Through the hard work of volunteers and with amazing partnerships, our coalition has attracted members representing thousands of lakes around the state, eager to take on the **KEEP IT CLEAN** challenge ([keepitcleanmn.org](#)). We have developed education campaigns, participated in media events, shared free resources, and, through grant funding and donations, provided signage and waste-removal support at private lake accesses to public waters. We have shown that our efforts are necessary, but our resources are limited.

Minnesotans tell us they need infrastructure to handle the waste products of a growing "ice camping" and winter angling phenomenon. Although people and their pets can now camp and recreate for extended amounts of time on frozen waters, there are very few options for safe and legal waste removal onshore.



This DNR Fisheries graph shows the growing disparity between winter and summer anglers over time at Lake of The Woods. We presume the data is similar for other large walleye destinations across the state. As you can see, the popularity of winter angling is increasing steadily.

According to DNR Creel Survey data, there were about 65,000 trips to Upper Red Lake in 3 months of 2022-2023. There were over 80,000 trips in 2021-2022. Mille Lacs Lake and Lake of the Woods experienced similar numbers. That translated to

over six million angler hours from December to February on these three lakes alone.

In 2024, Representative Andrew Myers- Minnetonka, chief authored our **KEEP IT CLEAN PROGRAM/GRANTS Bill** in the House (HF3662), and Senator Aric Putnam chief authored it in the Senate (SF3957). Although the bill did not pass last session, we are grateful to be working with Rep Myers and many

others on both sides of the aisle to reintroduce important **KEEP IT CLEAN** legislation this session that will serve all Minnesotans and protect our state waters.

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF3662&ssn=0&y=2024>

We believe a Shelter and Ice Recreation Program, like the existing DNR Boat and Water Safety Program, is the best way to teach the public the importance of caring for the environment and being safe during winter angling and recreation. We also recognize that small communities need incentives and opportunities to build, and upgrade winterized human waste removal infrastructure, so visitors, by the tens of thousands, are not overwhelming local services.

To that end, we are prepared to work with legislators and organizations who share our concerns and support our efforts to get the **Keep it Clean Program and Funding Bill** passed this session.

~ Clean ice means clean water. We pledge to help protect and preserve this valuable resource now, and for generations to come. ~