

AMY KLOBUCHAR  
MINNESOTA

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RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2024

The Honorable Martha Williams  
Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Williams:

As the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers the determination of lake sturgeon protections under the Endangered Species Act, I ask for careful consideration of the impact that an endangered listing may have on Minnesotans.

Thanks to the hard work by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), local advocacy groups, anglers, and many others interested in protecting this unique fish, Minnesota's sturgeon population is growing. Areas such as Lake of the Woods and Rainy River have seen the population grow to about 92,000 in 2014, nearly six times the estimate from the late 1980s. Since the lake sturgeon was listed as a special concern species in Minnesota in 1984, the Minnesota DNR worked hard to restore the population's stability, maintain a consistent supply of fingerlings in basin lakes and tributaries, restore habitat, and modify dams and barriers to improve fish migration and spawning. Minnesota biologists have joined with those in Wisconsin and Michigan to share data with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that demonstrates the best course of action for protecting and supporting the lake sturgeon.

In addition, anglers play an important economic role in many communities near areas that are open to fishing sturgeon during the late spring. Including the sturgeon in species protection could have economic impacts for the local fishing industry including resorts, restaurants, fishing guides, retail stores and bait suppliers.

During this determination period, I urge you to adhere to widely accepted scientific principles, embrace the data and feedback provided by the Minnesota DNR, and consider the decades-long success and ongoing progress of managing lake sturgeon populations. I look forward to working with you to identify and advance practical solutions that will protect the lake sturgeon while also minimizing economic impacts.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  


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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator