



September 2, 2008

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
433 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate  
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Sanders,

On behalf of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), the nation's leading trade association for the recreational fishing industry, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud you for your continued support of sea lamprey control in Lake Champlain.

ASA represents over 700 sportfishing manufacturers, retailers, and angler advocacy groups, as well as the interests of America's 40 million recreational anglers who generate a \$125 billion-a-year impact on the nation's economy. The ASA safeguards and promotes the enduring social, economic, and conservation values of sportfishing and works closely with all groups concerned with the conservation of our fisheries.

Lake Champlain is a substantial resource containing highly valuable fisheries. We recognize your sustained support of sea lamprey control in the lake, and ask for your further assistance in addressing current issues that may ensure a successful control program of this nuisance species going forward. As you may know, funding for sea lamprey control in Lake Champlain is not included in the Great Lakes Fishery Act of 1956. ASA respectfully requests that you work with other elected officials to amend the Act to include appropriations for the Vermont and New York offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – which share responsibility for Lake Champlain fisheries – specifically to implement the Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program. Obtaining base funding through the Act would help ensure the continued availability of necessary resources for the program.

In addition, the current permitting process for sea lamprey control in Vermont waters is cumbersome, resulting in the expenditure of a great deal of time, effort and money. We respectfully request you take a leadership role to change state law to facilitate the permitting process. We suggest that Vermont look to the processes that have been used for more than 40 years in Great Lakes states to successfully permit treatment of sea lamprey while at the same time protecting non-target species and the aquatic environment.

**AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION**

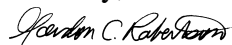
225 REINEKERS LANE, SUITE 420, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 • 703-519-9691 • FAX: 703-519-1872  
WEB: WWW.ASAFISHING.ORG • E-MAIL: INFO@ASAFISHING.ORG

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
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Page 2

The fisheries of Lake Champlain contribute approximately \$205 million annually to the regional economy. However, a major increase in parasitic sea lamprey numbers in Lake Champlain poses a substantial threat to the fisheries resources of the lake. Sea lamprey negatively impact fish populations and aquatic communities, and may even threaten the continued existence of species like the lake sturgeon which exists as a remnant population in Lake Champlain and is listed as endangered in Vermont. The impact on Lake Champlain fisheries has been so widespread that it has also been necessary to implement sea lamprey control on Vermont and New York tributaries of Lake Champlain.

Thanks to support from your offices and the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and New York Department of Environmental Conservation, there is evidence that the Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program is working to protect native gamefish and nongame species, including endangered species. Please help ensure that this program succeeds so the public may enjoy this unique natural resource for generations to come. Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Gordon Robertson  
Vice President

cc: Representative Peter Welch  
Governor Jim Douglas  
Senator Hillary Clinton  
Senator Charles Schumer  
Representative Kirsten Gillibrand  
Representative John McHugh  
Governor David A. Paterson