



Mr. Doug Ford
Premier
Legislative Building
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

April 2, 2020

Dear Premier Ford,

Thank you for your ongoing leadership during this challenging time for everyone in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the difficult decisions you are addressing within a constantly evolving situation, in the effort to prioritize public safety while mitigating disruptions to the economy and social peace of mind.

As Canada's recreational fishing business organization, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) represents the manufacturers, retail stores and sales agencies which serve the 8 million Canadians who fish. Our customers support an annual national economy of \$8.6 billion and together with hunting, over 100,000 jobs in every region of the nation.

In addition to the important economic aspects, recreational fishing is a major part of Canada's outdoor heritage culture. Fishing provides an ideal way for individuals and families to be outdoors with benefits to their mental and physical health, without being in close contact with others. As the original 'self-isolation' activity, fishing remains very compatible with physical distancing guidelines. The close proximity of lakes and streams to millions of residents ensures ease of access with minimal travel required. Fishing also provides many people with a means to obtain healthy and affordable food, which in tough economic times becomes increasingly important.

As you continue to direct the province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please consider the following requests:

- 1) Designate recreational fishing tackle manufacturers and retailers as 'essential businesses' which are allowed to remain open under proper safety and social distancing guidelines.
- 2) Allow fishing access sites, including boat ramps and parks, to remain open as much as possible.

We understand the need to close certain areas, including those which are readily overcrowded or require active staffing, but in general most public lands and waters can remain accessible in accordance with social distancing guidelines. Rather than implementing a ban on recreational fishing province wide, we urge you to consider a

more strategic approach that identifies high-use areas that may warrant temporary closure, while still allowing the majority of public waters to remain open. We understand the challenge in striking the right balance between public safety and allowing access, and we ask you to please work with park and fisheries officials to maintain public access in as many areas as possible.

We appreciate your consideration of our requests. Allowing recreational fishing business and activity to continue is important to provide a level of stability in a healthy outdoor environment. This will also help ensure a rapid recovery for related businesses when the crisis is over. CSIA stands ready to assist you in any way we can in order to help combat this pandemic and to keep anglers safe when they go fishing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Rhodes".

Kim Rhodes
President

cc. Mr. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
cc. Mr. Phil Morlock, Chair of CSIA Government Affairs