

SAMPLE LETTER ON BILL 205 COMORANT ISSUE TO MPP, MINISTER and/or PREMIER.

Dear

On May 18, 2016, Ontario Member of Provincial Parliament Robert Bailey introduced Private Member's Bill 205, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Amendment Act (Double-crested Cormorants). I am strongly opposed to Bill 205 and urge you to do everything in your power to make sure it goes no further.

If Bill 205 is passed, it will allow the uncontrolled hunting and trapping of Double-crested cormorants by anyone for any reason at any time. It will push this still recovering and highly vulnerable native waterbird back to near oblivion in Ontario.

Bill 205 is based on myths and misunderstanding and is ill-conceived, regressive and dangerous. It should not be called for consideration and debate at Committee.

Remarkably, while the regressive Bill 205 sits active in the Ontario governmental process, a US federal court just ended cormorant culling in 24 eastern US states saying that there was little scientific basis for it.

Cormorants have been blamed for almost every kind of problem, including polluting the water, destroying the environment, killing the trees, eating all the fish, spreading disease, chasing away other colonial waterbirds, negatively impacting endangered snakes, reducing habitat for butterflies and more. If the hysterical rantings of cormorant detractors were to be believed, you'd think cormorants were a black plague decimating everything in their path. But it's nonsense.

Here are the facts:

- Cormorants are native to the Great Lakes Basin and an integral component of its natural ecosystems.
- Cormorants eat fish but there is no scientific evidence supporting the suggestion that cormorants have any significant negative impact on the fish caught by commercial fishermen or recreational anglers.
- Cormorants are primary predators of invasive fish species, such as round gobies and alewives.
- Fish populations are healthier and more robust in areas where there are lots of cormorants.
- There are no species of native fish that are threatened with being wiped out by cormorants.
- Cormorants have co-evolved with fish over tens of millions of years and there is no record of any cormorant species anywhere ever wiping out a species of fish.
- Cormorant guano can kill trees, but the number of trees killed by cormorant guano is tiny.
- The death of some trees is a part of a natural process of succession that occurs in colonial waterbird colonies all over the world.
- Cormorants enhance species biodiversity and other waterbirds, including herons, egrets, pelicans and gulls, live side by side or in close proximity to them.
- Cormorant colonies use less than 1% of the total Great Lakes island area.
- There are only a few sizeable cormorant colonies in the entire Great Lakes Basin.
- Cormorant numbers have leveled off and seem to be dropping in some areas.

The irrational hatred of cormorants runs deep and many anglers and special interest, anti-cormorant groups would like nothing more than to see Bill 205 passed. But this draconian piece of legislation must not be passed. Please do everything you can to make sure that Bill 205 is killed as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,