

Dear Tournament Organizer:

We would like to thank you for your efforts to abide by the regulations that govern zebra mussel inspections and decontamination. The importance of your role in looking out for the well being of the state's waters cannot be emphasized enough. Simply, you provide the last opportunity to protect our waters before a boat is launched, and your service of boat inspection, education, and compliance reporting is greatly appreciated.

Presently, each contestant is required to sign a "Zebra Mussel Decontamination Statement" that testifies to the cleanliness of their boat, certified by the contest director's signature. Specifically, the owner acknowledges that their boat either has not been in contact with waters east of the continental divide within the past 30 days or if it was in such waters, that the boat has been cleaned according to the protocols given in the "Zebra Mussel Decontamination Report". A copy of both is attached for your reference.

The impact the zebra mussel has had on states in the mid-west and eastern U.S. is enormous. The running total cost over the past 13 years is estimated at \$5 billion and the ecological impacts are still being revealed, though some fish population declines have occurred. Impacts like those experienced elsewhere would devastate the economic and ecological resources of the state.

Fishing tournaments attract thousands of boaters each year and you provide a very important service to everyone by inspecting boats and ensuring compliance with the law. Because you are the last contact before launch, we urge you to expand your efforts and encourage participants coming from east of the Rockies to have their boats cleaned BEFORE coming to Washington. Also, please keep your eyes open for ANY boat coming into the area that may be contaminated with zebra mussels or with aquatic plants. If you see one, please discourage them from launching in our waters until the boat is cleaned, or report them to a WDFW enforcement officer or the Washington State Patrol. Transport of zebra mussels is a serious issue, and their introduction has very serious consequences.

We thank you for your inspection and education efforts, and hope you will be on the lookout for boaters transporting zebra mussels, aquatic weeds, or other harmful species. Your efforts to protect the resources that we all value are greatly appreciated by everyone, including your fellow fishermen.