

House Concurrent Resolution No. 39

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5577L.011

2 **Whereas**, sport fishing is a great industry, recreation, and occupation in Missouri;
3 and

4 **Whereas**, hand fishing, which is also referred to as "noodling", for channel, blue,
5 and flathead catfish is one of the ultimate challenges in the arena of sport fishing; and

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7 **Whereas**, a growing number of catfishermen in Missouri, which includes men,
8 women, and children, wish to participate in the age-old and challenging sport of hand fishing for
9 catfish; and

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11 **Whereas**, hand fishing is a legalized sport in 13 states, 6 of which border Missouri;
12 and

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14 **Whereas**, hand fishing studies have been conducted in some of these legal states
15 which have shown to have no adverse or minimal effect on their catfish population; and

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17 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation, Fisheries Division, when
18 taking into account the impact of current liberal regulations relating to catfishing in Missouri,
19 has not presented any compelling biological evidence that suggest legalizing hand fishing in
20 Missouri would harm the resources; and

21
22 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation has stated that there are
23 approximately 664,000 catfish anglers in Missouri, and by Missouri law, they can catch 5
24 flatheads, 5 blue cats, and 10 channel catfish, or 20 catfish a day, 365 days a year, or 7,300
25 catfish for each permit sold; and

26 **Whereas**, Dr. Mark Morgan at the University of Missouri-Columbia conducted a
27 study and found that there are approximately 2,000 hand fishers in Missouri; and

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29 **Whereas**, these hand fishermen are asking the Missouri Department of
30 Conservation to allow them to hand catch 5 channel, blue, or flathead catfish in a 61-day
31 statewide season for each permit sold, which would be 0.000685 percent of the 7,300 catfish now
32 allowed each catfish angler in Missouri; and

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34 **Whereas**, during the 2005 and 2006 Missouri Department of Conservation's trial
35 hand fishing season, there were only 159 hand fishing permits sold, and out of the 159 permits
36 only 83 hand fishermen actually fished; and

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38 **Whereas**, these 83 hand fishermen only caught and kept 27 catfish, and caught and
39 released 20 catfish in 201 trips on the Mississippi and South Fabius, two of the three rivers that
40 were legal to hand fish in 2005 and 2006; and

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42 **Whereas**, the other catfish anglers that fished on the Mississippi and South Fabius
43 in 2005 and 2006 caught 341 catfish that had been tagged by the Missouri Department of
44 Conservation; and

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46 **Whereas**, the hand fishermen that fished on the Mississippi and South Fabius in
47 2005 and 2006 caught only 1 catfish that had been tagged by the Missouri Department of
48 Conservation; and

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50 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation canceled the five-year
51 experimental trial hand fishing season after two years for no valid reason; and

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53 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation survey of 6,000 catfish anglers
54 in 2004 showed 51% supported a regulated hand fishing season, with only 22.9% opposed; and

55 **Whereas**, the USDA Forest Service statewide survey of Missouri citizens
56 conducted in 2004 showed 68% supported a regulated season and only 7% opposed; and
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58 **Whereas**, the second USDA Forest Service statewide survey of Missouri citizens
59 in 2006 showed 70% in support and 9% opposed; and
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61 **Whereas**, the legalization of hand fishing is supported by the Missouri Farm
62 Bureau, the Missouri Farmer's Union, MoFED, and the Missouri Trappers Association; and
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64 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation is responsible for all Missouri
65 state fishing and game regulations, and should provide hand fishers with appropriate information
66 and regulations; and
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68 **Whereas**, recognizing and respecting the Research Division of the Missouri
69 Department of Conservation, they should continue balanced research on hand fishing for
70 channel, blue, and flathead catfish in conjunction with the catfish harvest evaluation project
71 (CHEP); and
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73 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation's out-of-state Independent
74 Science Review Panel recommended further hand fishing evaluation; and
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76 **Whereas**, the Missouri Department of Conservation's mission statement states "to
77 provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife
78 resources";
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80 **Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the members of the House of
81 Representatives of the Ninety-fourth General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the Senate
82 concurring therein, hereby strongly encourage the Missouri Department of Conservation to have
83 a pilot regulated statewide hand fishing season for channel, blue, and flathead catfish from June

84 first to July thirty-first, beginning in 2008, to allow hand fishers to take 5 of these fish by hand;
85 and
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87 **Be it further resolved** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of
88 Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for John
89 Hoskins, Director of the Department of Conservation and each commission of the Conservation
90 Commission of Missouri.
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