



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**REIMBURSE PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

RECEIVED

FEB 25 1988

House Bill 5241 as introduced  
First Analysis (2-3-88)

Sponsor: Rep. Sharon Gire  
Committee: Towns and Counties

Mich. State Law Library

**THE APPARENT PROBLEM:**

Michigan's 14 statewide regional planning commissions are composed of delegates from various local governments who come together to study the various problems of their respective local communities in areas such as transportation, economic development, water quality, etc., and work to provide solutions for these various problems. The delegates are appointed by the respective governments and represent a percentage of electoral power at these regional planning commission meetings. These regional planning commission (RPC) members are not required to attend the meetings, but are strongly urged to do so. One of the incentives in promoting attendance is to reimburse these members for any expenses incurred in attending the meetings. Current law permits regional planning commission members to be reimbursed but does not specifically indicate who is to reimburse them — although it implies that an RPC has the option to reimburse its members. Most RPC's do not have money set aside to reimburse members for attending meetings. However, many of the local governments with RPC members have been more than willing to reimburse their members, but the law is silent on whether they may do so. In fact, the attorney general has interpreted the law's silence as meaning that local governments do not have the option of reimbursing RPC members. Consequently, RPC members may or may not choose to attend meetings, knowing they won't be reimbursed for expenses involved. Some believe the law should be amended to allow either a local unit of government or a regional planning commission the option to reimburse members a per diem allowance for mileage and any other expenses incurred in attending a meeting.

**THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:**

The bill would amend Public Act 281 of 1945 to specify that a member of the regional planning commission could be reimbursed the per diem allowance and mileage for each meeting attended by either the local unit which appointed the member or by the regional planning commission itself. If the local unit which appointed the member did not establish and pay a per diem allowance or mileage, the member could be reimbursed a per diem allowance or mileage as is established and paid by the regional commission. Also, the bill would specify that either the local unit which appointed the member or the regional planning commission could reimburse the member "for actual expenses incurred as a member of the commission" who performs "the work of the commission."

MCL 125.14

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Fiscal information is not available.

**ARGUMENTS:**

**For:**

Currently, when a regional planning commission meeting is scheduled, a member of the commission, who represents a particular local government of the commission, cannot expect to be reimbursed for any expenses associated with attending the meeting. State law allows the RPC the option to reimburse the member, but RPC's will usually opt not to reimburse since a commission's budget does not set aside money designed to encourage delegates to attend meetings. Since the local governments involved have electoral power on an RPC — represented in an RPC member — many local governments would like to be able to legally reimburse their delegates when they attend meetings. Local governments say the option to reimburse could be used as an incentive to encourage their RPC members to attend meetings, which would help the governments get their concerns and opinions (and votes) registered at the meetings. Since the bill would make reimbursement optional for local governments, a municipality could reimburse its members for expenses incurred for attending meetings if the municipality had funds available to do so.

**POSITIONS:**

The Michigan Association of Counties supports the bill. (2-2-88)

The Michigan Townships Association supports the bill. (2-2-88)

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) supports the concept of the bill. (2-2-88)

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners supports the bill. (2-2-88)

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