



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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DESIGNATE THE OFFICIAL STATE SOIL

**House Bill 4511 as introduced
First Analysis (1-30-90)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Richard A. Sofio
Committee: State Affairs**

RECEIVED

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Mich. State Univ.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

One of Michigan's most important natural resources is the soil that supports its farms and forests. The type of soil present affects natural vegetation and wildlife distribution, recreational use, agricultural applications, and suitability for construction. As a means of recognizing the importance that soil has for a state's economy and environment, several states have designated an official state soil, in the way a state designates an official state bird or flower.

Soil scientists have identified about 400 soil series in Michigan; a soil series is a reliably recognizable type of soil distinguishable by an examination of the soil profile from just below the surface to a depth of five feet. Of the various soil series, the Kalkaska soil series has been proposed by soil classifiers for designation as the official state soil of Michigan. The Kalkaska series is a sandy soil that appears to be unique to the state, and supports the state's beech-maple climax forest, along with important agricultural and recreational uses where that forest has been replaced. The soil is one of the most widely distributed soils in Michigan, being common in the Upper Peninsula and the northern half of the Lower Peninsula. The series was first described in 1927, making it one of the first established series identified in Michigan, and it presents an impressive visual display, with sharply contrasting sandy layers of gray/white, dark brown, and yellow.

Proponents of naming an official state soil propose enactment of a law designating the Kalkaska soil series as the official state soil.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would create a new public act to adopt the Kalkaska soil series as the official state soil.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

In its analysis of an identical Senate bill (SB 236, at present in the House Committee on State Affairs), the Senate Fiscal Agency said that the bill would have no fiscal impact on state or local government. (4-11-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Designating an official state soil would lend official recognition to the significance that soil and its conservation has for the environment and the economy of the state. Educators could use the example of the state soil to teach about the importance of soil resources. Prompt enactment of the bill could be particularly useful in this regard, coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, or with the observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week (April 26 to May 6). The Kalkaska series is appropriate for selection as the state soil, meeting criteria of extensive distribution, visual display, diversified use, and economic importance.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Association of Conservation Districts supports the bill. (1-24-90)

The Michigan Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society supports the bill. (1-24-90)

The Soil Classifiers Association of Michigan supports the bill. (1-24-90)

The Soil Conservation Service in Michigan supports the bill. (1-24-90)

H.B. 4511 (1-30-90)