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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 236 (as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Senator Connie Binsfeld

Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 4-11-89

RATIONALE

Some people claim that Michigan's fertile soil is the State's most important natural resource. Two of Michigan's major industries, agriculture and forestry, are heavily dependent on the presence and quality of soil. Soil series (or types) are numerous and their characteristics vary from location to location. Since such factors as climate, rivers, and geologic and botanical history affect soil characteristics, many different soil series can be found in a limited geographic area. In fact, about 450 different soils can be found in Michigan. Many environmental and conservation groups believe that greater public knowledge about soil and its importance to all life forms should be encouraged and that one way to emphasize that importance would be to designate an official State soil for Michigan. The most extensive soil in this State is the Kalkaska soil series, which reportedly is unique to Michigan and is found in both peninsulas. Proponents of naming an official State soil believe that the Kalkaska soil series should receive that designation.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new Act to adopt the Kalkaska soil series as the official soil of the State of Michigan.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

ARGUMENTS**Supporting Argument**

Designating an official soil for the State of Michigan would bestow the kind of attention upon the significance of soil that groups such as conservation districts and local watershed councils believe is valuable to public knowledge. Stressing the importance of Michigan's soils to the State's natural resources and economy can only increase appreciation for, and the desire to maintain, the quality of life that Michigan residents enjoy. Further, the Kalkaska soil series should receive the designation of "State Soil of Michigan". Not only is it the most extensive soil series in the State, located in both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas, but it is well-drained and effectively filters water, thereby supporting Michigan's vital agricultural and forestry industries.

Legislative Analyst: P. Affholter
Fiscal Analyst: G. Cutler

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