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POLICY: PROMOTE OUTDOOR REC.

**House Bill 5247 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (2-16-94)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Tracey Yokich
Committee: Tourism & Recreation**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Michigan Tourism Policy Act was created in 1993 to, among other things, require the Michigan Travel Bureau and Michigan Travel Commission to work together to develop a long-range master plan identifying certain goals related to tourism development in the state. The act contains a list of things which the legislature "intends to encourage" through it (i.e., tourism growth to keep the state competitive with other tourist destinations, developing a means to market the state as a tourist destination, appreciation of the state's various strengths, and the like). Michigan's proximity to the Great Lakes and its abundance of natural resources, including extensive woodland areas and thousands of inland lakes and streams, make it a popular tourist destination each year for millions of people yearning to spend time outdoors. Some people believe encouraging recognition and appreciation of Michigan's natural resources and its many outdoor recreational opportunities should be one of the tourism policy act's numerous goals.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Tourism Policy Act to add to the list of various things which the legislature intends to encourage through the act recognition of state and locally managed recreational opportunities, including camping, hunting, fishing, boating, golfing, skiing and other outdoor recreation experiences. In addition, the bill would add language specifying that one of the act's purposes would be to recognize "natural" (as well as historic and scenic) environments in order to enhance the state's appeal as a tourist destination; and language would be added specifying that one of the act's goals would be to encourage health, education and intercultural appreciation of, among other things, the state's natural resources.

MCL 2.101 and 2.102c

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency says the bill would not affect state or local budget expenditures. (2-14-94)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill simply would add to the list of things which "the legislature intends to encourage" via the Tourism Policy Act recognition and appreciation of the state's natural resources and, specifically, of state and locally managed recreational opportunities comprising camping, hunting, fishing, boating, golfing, skiing and the like. Michigan abounds in natural resources and millions of people--including many Michigan residents--annually pursue the outdoor activities listed in the bill, which significantly contributes to Michigan's multi-billion dollar tourist industry. By adding this language to the act, the bill would encourage state agencies responsible for promoting the state as a tourist destination to emphasize these outdoor activities in promotional materials and other methods used to attract tourists to the state.

Response:

A spokesman for the Michigan Travel Bureau says that, although the bureau already works to aggressively promote the state as a place to enjoy outdoor activities such as those listed in the bill, it believes the bill could be problematic by being so specific. For instance, the spokesman says that because a significant number of people are opposed to hunting, this particular activity has not been emphasized in promotional literature as a reason to visit the state. The bureau fears the bill could limit its flexibility in determining whether or how much it should promote certain controversial outdoor activities.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS:

A spokesman for the Legislative Service Bureau says Section 2c (MCL 2.102c) should be removed from the bill as it no longer contains amendatory

language. (An earlier version of the bill proposed amending this specific section of the act, but the House Tourism and Recreation Committee voted to adopt Substitute H-2, which does not include the language.)

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (2-14-94)

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs supports the bill. (2-9-94)

The Michigan Recreation and Park Association supports the bill. (2-11-94)

The Michigan Travel Bureau supports the bill, although a spokesman for the bureau says that it currently promotes most of the outdoor recreational activities specified in the bill. (2-14-93)