



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 660 (as enrolled)
 Sponsor: Senator Walter H. North
 Senate Committee: Transportation and Tourism
 House Committee: Conservation, Environment and Great Lakes

Date Completed: 2-23-96

RATIONALE

Public Act 99 of 1994 (which has been incorporated into the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act) requires snowmobilers to purchase a \$10 annual Michigan snowmobile trail permit sticker. The permit fee must be paid by both Michigan residents and out-of-State snowmobilers who wish to operate their snowmobiles in Michigan. The fee is in addition to the annual \$15 registration fee that must be paid by those registering their snowmobiles in this State, or a registration fee charged by another state or province. Ninety percent of the trail permit sticker fee must be credited to the Recreational Snowmobile Trail Improvement Fund; it was estimated in 1994 that the fee would generate approximately \$2.6 million for deposit into that Fund. Since the fee is designed to ensure that those who use snowmobile trails subsidize the costs of maintaining and developing them, some people believe that snowmobilers who do not use the trails should not have to buy a permit. Apparently, some snowmobiles are used exclusively for access to frozen waters for the purpose of ice fishing, and it has been suggested that these vehicles should be exempt from the permit requirement.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide that snowmobiles used solely for transportation on the frozen surface of public waters for the purpose of ice fishing, would be exempt from the requirement of purchasing and displaying a snowmobile trail permit sticker.

The bill is tie-barred to House Bill 5149. House Bill 5149 (S-2), which is tie-barred to Senate Bill 660, also would create an exception to the trail permit requirement for snowmobiles used for ice fishing, as well as make several other changes related to trail permit stickers.

MCL 324.82118

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

According to the Department of Natural Resources, many snowmobiles in Michigan are used exclusively to gain access to frozen waters for purposes of fishing. As normally operated under these circumstances, the machines are not operated on public lands or highways. For example, some snowmobilers may keep old snowmobiles at their shoreline cottages merely for the purpose of driving quickly across the lake to their ice shanties. Others might park cars and trailers in public parking areas and drive from there to the ice shanties. It would only be fair to exempt these individuals from having to purchase a \$10 trail permit sticker that subsidizes the costs of a snowmobile trail system that they do not use.

Legislative Analyst: S. Margules

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would result in an indeterminate decrease in State revenues, depending on the number of snowmobilers who would be exempt from the purchase of a trail sticker.

Fiscal Analyst: G. Cutler

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.