



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

House Bill 5870 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Ken Sikkema
House Committee: Conservation, Environment and Great Lakes
Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 352 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, which concerns wilderness and natural areas, to provide for easements in wilderness, wild, and natural areas under certain conditions; change the signage requirements in those areas; generally prohibit motorized equipment, but delete the prohibition against hunting and trapping, in those areas; and provide that wilderness areas could have natural history value, rather than historical value.

Specifically, the bill provides that, if a right-of-way or an easement for ingress and egress were granted on land prior to the land's designation as a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), upon request, could grant an easement along the route of the existing right-of-way or easement for the installation and maintenance of utilities for gas, electric, telephone, and cable services. In granting an easement, the DNR would have to require conditions necessary to protect the wilderness area, wild area, or natural area.

The bill also would require the DNR to post signs concerning an area's dedication in "appropriate", rather than "conspicuous" locations along the border of wilderness, wild, or natural areas and would make it permissive, rather than mandatory, that the signs indicate which activities are prohibited and which activities are punishable as a misdemeanor.

Further, the bill would delete the prohibition against hunting and trapping on State land in a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area, or on State land proposed by the DNR for dedication in one of these categories during the 90 days its dedication is pending. The bill, however, would prohibit motorized equipment on such lands, unless the DNR approved its use for management purposes or conservation practices.

Currently, the Act defines "wilderness area" as a tract of undeveloped State land or water under the control of, and regulated and dedicated by, the DNR that meets certain criteria including containing ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, scenic, or historical value. The bill would refer to natural history value, rather than historical value.

MCL 324.35101 et al.

Legislative Analyst: L. Burghardt

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Date Completed: 5-23-96

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.