

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 529 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Ken Sikkema
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 5-3-99

RATIONALE

Early this century, 4-H programs were developed to introduce nature study as a basis for better agricultural education and to provide experiential learning opportunities. These programs also develop learning materials and teaching methods that focus on the social, emotional, and educational needs of children. Reportedly in 1997, over 6 million youths between five and 19 years of age participated in a number of different 4-H programs. According to the National 4-H Council, these programs included clubs, special interest groups, school enrichment, individual study, instructional televisions, and extension programs.

Earlier this year, a 4-H Youth Conservation Council in Michigan gave a presentation concerning watershed management and bovine tuberculosis in deer to the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. Some people believe that an official 4-H Youth Conservation Council established by the Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Programs and supported by various State agencies would help benefit youths interested in conservation issues.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Programs to establish a "Youth Conservation Council" to provide an advanced educational opportunity for youths interested in conservation research, education, and policy making. The bill would be repealed four years after its effective date.

Members

The Council would have to consist of 18 students between 13 and 19 years of age, who would be selected from each of the following Michigan regions: southeast Lower Peninsula; southwest Lower Peninsula; east central Lower Peninsula; west central Lower Peninsula; northern Lower Peninsula; and Upper Peninsula.

Members of the Council would have to be appointed by the Governor for one-year terms, although an individual could be reappointed for one additional term. Individuals would have to be selected on the basis of their interest and involvement in conservation-related activities. The Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Programs would have to solicit recommendations of interested individuals from schools and other organizations that promote conservation and environmental education.

Members of the Council would have to be appointed by October 1 of each year. The Council would have to meet by November of each year for an organizational meeting and to establish a schedule of activities that the Council would undertake during its tenure. At the meeting, members of the Council could elect a chairperson and other officers that the members considered necessary or beneficial.

Duties

The Council would have to do all of the following:

- Study, research, and make recommendations to the Governor, the Natural Resources Commission, and the Legislature on long-term policies pertaining to conservation, protection, and sound management of the State's environment and natural resources.
- Meet at least twice each year to discuss the responsibilities of the Council.
- Organize regional subcommittees to carry out tasks, as appropriate.
- Prepare an annual report of its findings and recommendations.
- Make a presentation of its findings and recommendations at a joint meeting of the standing committees of the Senate and the House that handle issues pertaining to natural resources and the environment.

Support

The Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth

Programs would have to make arrangements for the meetings of the Council, provide the Council with appropriate support to assist the Council in carrying out its responsibilities, and facilitate meetings of the regional subcommittees of the Council, if adequate appropriations were made to the university for the purposes specified in the bill.

The Coordinator of Environmental Education, the Environmental Education Advisory Committee, the Departments of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, and other State agencies would be required to work cooperatively with the Council.

MCL 324.2511

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

The proposed Youth Conservation Council would involve adolescents throughout the State who would participate in research, education, decision-making, and problem-solving on conservation issues that affected their community and environment. These roles and responsibilities would help foster valuable learning experiences and positive opportunities while addressing critical conservation issues.

Supporting Argument

Since the bill would establish an official Youth Conservation Council under the Michigan State University Extension 4-H Youth Programs and require cooperation from various State agencies, it could provide financial support for the program.

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a minimal fiscal impact on State and local government, depending on the passage of Senate Bill 364 (the Department of Environmental Quality budget bill), which includes \$5,000 for the Michigan Youth Conservation Council, for FY 1999-2000.

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.