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Senate Bill 106 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Bev Hammerstrom
Committee: Local, Urban and State Affairs

Date Completed: 5-21-03

RATIONALE

Through the years the State has adopted various objects, animals, and plants as official State symbols. In addition to the State flag, seal, and coat-of-arms, Michigan has an official State stone (Petoskey); flower (Apple Blossom); fish (Brook Trout); reptile (Painted Turtle); gem (Isle Royal Greenstone); soil (Kalkaska soil series); bird (Robin); tree (White Pine); wildflower (Dwarf Lake Iris); and fossil (mastodon). It has been pointed out that while Michigan is known for its abundance of fresh, clean water, it has no symbol for its clean water. It has been suggested that an aquatic plant, the American lotus blossom, be named the State symbol for clean water.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new act to designate the American lotus blossom (*Nelumbo lutea*) as the official State symbol for clean water in Michigan.

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

State symbols should highlight wildlife and natural resources in the State, and should represent something special or unique about Michigan. The lotus blossom meets those criteria. It is America's largest aquatic plant and lives in shallow muck-bottom areas along the Great Lakes shores, inland lakes, ponds, and rivers. Its cream-yellow bloom can reach a foot in diameter. The lotus blossom helps to clean the waters it lives in, which contributes to a healthy habitat for fish and other aquatic

animals, and it adds beauty to the landscape. By naming the lotus blossom the State symbol for clean water, the bill could promote use of the blossom as a teaching tool that would encourage students to learn about aquatic life in Michigan as well as protect clean water.

Opposing Argument

Michigan has too many official State symbols already. While there does not seem to be any harm in adopting a State symbol for clean water, some have wondered how many symbols will be enough. Rather than drawing attention to something that is unique about the State, or that Michigan residents take pride in, the adoption of numerous State symbols may trivialize them all.

Legislative Analyst: George Towne

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

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