



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



BILL ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

Senate Bill 398 (Substitute S-3 as passed by the Senate)
Senate Bill 415 (Substitute S-3 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Tony Stamas (S.B. 398)
Senator Michelle A. McManus (S.B. 415)
Committee: Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism

Date Completed: 8-16-05

RATIONALE

Some people believe that Michigan should look into a multistate recreational program similar to that available in the States of Washington and Oregon, which provide for an add-on to a Federal parks pass. The Golden Eagle Passport is a pass provided by the Federal government that allows the purchaser entrance to all sites under the control of the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service for a cost of \$65 per year. In 2004, for an additional \$20, Washington and Oregon began offering the Washington and Oregon Recreation Pass (WORP) as an add-on to the Golden Eagle Passport. In addition to the Federal sites described above, the supplemental pass covers the entrance fees for all Oregon State Parks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fee sites located in either of those states, and parking at selected Washington State Parks. The WORP was created to streamline the fee structure for visitors (who had been confused by a variety of fees for different sites) and promote recreational opportunities in the region.

Due to Michigan's geography, outdoor recreation is a significant component of the State's economy. In addition to numerous State and local parks, Michigan is home to Isle Royale National Park, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, the Hiawatha National Forest, and several national wildlife refuges and other sites under Federal control. It has been suggested that perhaps Michigan and other Great Lakes states could benefit from a partnership similar to the WORP to promote tourism within the Great Lakes

region. In a related matter, it also has been suggested that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) should seek to enter into agreements with its counterpart agencies in other states to share records related to snowmobiling violations.

CONTENT

Senate Bill 398 (S-3) would amend Part 741 (State Parks System) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources, to submit a plan that would promote multijurisdictional recreational opportunities for residents of and visitors to the Great Lakes region.

Senate Bill 415 (S-3) would amend Part 821 (Snowmobiles) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the DNR to seek to enter into agreements with the appropriate agencies of other states for the sharing of records of convictions involving certain snowmobiling offenses.

The bills are described below in further detail.

Senate Bill 398 (S-3)

Within one year after the bill's effective date, the Natural Resources Commission would have to submit the required plan to the Governor and the standing committees

of the Legislature with primary jurisdiction over natural resources and the environment.

The plan would have to include mechanisms to share recreational opportunities such as snowmobiling, boating, off-road vehicle use, hunting, fishing, and other recreational pursuits within the Great Lakes states. The plan also would have to include mechanisms to expand tourism related to the pursuit of recreational opportunities within the Great Lakes states.

In addition, the plan would have to include recommendations on a program that would allow Michigan to work with other states, local units of government, and the Federal government to create a multiuse, multijurisdictional recreational pass that would allow residents of and visitors to the Great Lakes states to enjoy recreational opportunities within those states.

Senate Bill 415 (S-3)

Part 821 requires the Secretary of State to issue an order, with no expiration date, that a person not operate a snowmobile, when the Secretary of State receives the appropriate records of conviction of the following:

- Two convictions of a felony involving the use of a snowmobile within seven years.
- Any combination of two convictions within seven years of operating a snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance or with an unlawful blood alcohol content (BAC).
- One conviction of operating a snowmobile while under the influence or with an unlawful BAC and causing the death or a serious impairment of a body function of another person.
- Any combination of three convictions within 10 years of a violation listed above.

The proposed record-sharing agreements under the bill would involve the convictions described above.

Proposed MCL 324.74126 (S.B. 398)
MCL 324.82148 (S.B. 415)

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 Great Lakes region offers numerous outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, sailing, camping, swimming, hiking, and snowmobiling. An interstate program could enable each Great Lakes state to leverage its individual recreational resources to the benefit of the entire region's economic development. An annual entrance pass, such as the WORP, could increase the visibility of all recreational sites in the region and save visitors money at each site, thus encouraging them to travel and visit multiple sites. By requiring the NRC and the DNR to submit a multijurisdictional plan, Senate Bill 398 (S-3) would enable the State to examine in depth the potential benefit of forming such a partnership.

If a multijurisdictional recreation program were created, residents prohibited from operating snowmobiles in their own states might be more likely to travel to other states. The record-sharing agreements proposed by Senate Bill 415 (S-3) would prevent those who have shown themselves to be irresponsible or dangerous operators from putting people at risk by simply crossing state lines. If the agreements related to snowmobile violations were effective, the information-sharing requirement could be expanded in the future to include other violations related to recreation.

Response: Public Act 392 of 2004 re-established the disbanded Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks to provide input into the parks' operations. Among other things, the Committee must advise the Governor, the NRC, and the Legislature on State parks policy; advise on financial planning and pursue adequate budget support; coordinate with other agencies to provide the most effective and economical services possible; and seek the development of a broad variety of programs, facilities, and services for citizens using the parks. Although Senate Bill 398 (S-3) refers to the NRC, its requirements would be consistent with the Committee's prescribed duties. Perhaps the Committee should play a role in drafting the required plan.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

FISCAL IMPACT

Senate Bill 398 (S-3)

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

Senate Bill 415 (S-3)

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the State. The sharing of conviction records could increase costs for both the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of State for staff time, resources, and information technology due to collaboration with other states in tracking violators and updating snowmobile registrations and permits.

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels
Bill Bowerman

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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.