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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 354 (Substitute S-2 as reported)

Sponsor: Senator Michelle A. McManus

Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 401 (Wildlife Conservation) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to:

- Administer a program to control and manage double-crested cormorants in order to reduce damage caused by the birds.
- Participate in a federally recognized organization of states, such as the Mississippi Flyway Council, to coordinate a regional effort to reduce cormorant damage.
- Seek funding from the Great Lakes Protection Fund for deposit into the Cormorant Control Fund.

The regional effort would have to include urging the Federal government to 1) expand state options for double-crested cormorant control by revising the Federal depredation order; and 2) seek to amend the Migratory Bird Convention with Mexico to designate the double-crested cormorant as a game species.

The bill is tie-barred to House Bill 4471, which would define several terms used in Senate Bill 354 (S-2), and House Bill 4614, which would create the Cormorant Control Fund.

Proposed MCL 324.40107c

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would cost the State an indeterminate amount for the cormorant control program and the activities of a multistate collaboration. Michigan's Great Lakes Protection Fund receives revenue from the regional Great Lakes Protection Fund to support research and protection grants for projects related to the Great Lakes. This revenue is appropriated in the Department of Environmental Quality budget primarily to support the Office of the Great Lakes and for research grants. It is unclear whether the money to support cormorant control activities would come from the regional Great Lakes Protection Fund or if the bill would earmark a portion of Michigan's annual distribution from the regional fund.

The Cormorant Control Fund would support the proposed Great Lakes cormorant control collaboration and would not cover expenses of the proposed cormorant control program. Other than a potential transfer of money from the Great Lakes Protection Fund, no fund source is identified to support the collaboration or the control program.

In FY 2006-07, \$150,000 from the State's General Fund was appropriated for the DNR to conduct cormorant control activities. Expenditure of this money is contingent upon matching Federal funds, which have not been provided yet. This appropriation will lapse if not spent by September 30, 2007.

Date Completed: 5-17-07

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels