



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 978 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Tony Stamas
Committee: Commerce and Tourism

(as enrolled)

Date Completed: 6-5-08

RATIONALE

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund was established by a constitutional amendment approved by the State's voters in 1984. The Trust Fund consists of revenue collected or reserved by the State under leases for the extraction of nonrenewable resources from State-owned land, and provides financial assistance for the purchase of land or rights in land for public recreation or for protection of the land because of its environmental importance or its scenic beauty. The Natural Resources Trust Fund board annually receives applications for funding and establishes evaluation criteria. The board also considers special initiatives. In recent years, these have included the acquisition or development of trailways that provide linkages to recreational opportunities, and the acquisition of land or development of facilities in urban areas. It has been suggested that recreational trails that intersect downtown areas could provide an important link between recreational and commercial opportunities and activities. To that end, some people believe that the Trust Fund board should give particular consideration to acquiring land and land rights for the development and maintenance of such trails.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Natural Resources Trust Fund board to give particular consideration to acquiring land and rights for trails that intersect downtown areas.

Under the Act, the board must determine which land and rights in land within Michigan should be acquired and which public recreation facilities should be developed with money from the Natural Resources Trust Fund. Each January, the board must submit to the Legislature a list of the land and rights in land and the public recreation facilities that the board has determined should be acquired or developed with Trust Fund money, compiled in order of priority. Under the bill, in preparing that list, the board would have to give particular consideration to the acquisition of land and rights in land for recreational trails that intersect the downtown areas of cities and villages.

MCL 324.1907

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 development of multiple-use trails for activities such as bicycling, roller-blading, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling is critical to providing recreational opportunities to Michigan's residents and visitors. Redeveloping and maintaining the commercial viability of downtown areas are important components of efforts to support and sustain Michigan's economic success. Promoting the development of recreational trails that intersect downtown areas addresses both recreational and commercial concerns. Vibrant downtowns provide a mix

of complementary uses in a concentrated area that benefits a community's commercial vitality and economic viability. Recreational trails help to improve the quality of life in a community and make it a more attractive place to live, visit, and conduct business.

The City of Midland provides an excellent example of how these recreational and commercial interests can combine. The Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, a 30-mile, paved, multi-use recreational trail, extends from just outside of Clare to Midland. Its eastern terminus is located at a park right behind Midland's Main Street downtown area. This intersection encourages trail users to frequent downtown Midland's shops and restaurants.

By requiring the Natural Resources Trust Fund board to give particular consideration to acquiring land and rights in land for trails that intersect downtown areas, the bill would encourage the development of more recreational and commercial intersections such as the one in Midland.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

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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.