

Legislative Analysis



ESTABLISH NEW DARK SKY PRESERVE

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House Bill 5414

Sponsor: Rep. Frank Foster

Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation

Complete to 3-12-12

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5414 AS INTRODUCED 2-21-12

The bill would designate the state-owned land encompassing Wilderness State Park and the state forestland within Bliss Township, Cross Village Township, and Wawatam in Emmet County as a dark sky preserve.

The bill amends Part 751 (Dark Sky Preserve) (MCL 324.75101) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA).

Under the act, all outdoor lighting within a dark sky preserve must (1) be directed downward; (2) whenever possible, be provided by fully shielded fixtures; and (3) wherever practical and appropriate, be equipped with motion sensor fixtures and not fixtures that remain lighted during all hours of darkness.

Currently, land within the Lake Hudson State Recreation Area is the only designated dark sky preserve in the state.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5414 would have no significant fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

With the passage of 1993 PA 57 (MCL 322.821-826), Michigan became the first state in the country to designate an area of public land as a "dark sky preserve." The preserve created at the Lake Hudson State Recreation Area (near Clayton, Michigan) was set up as a demonstration project to test the concept of preserving night skies by limiting outdoor lighting. As enacted, Section 75106 of NREPA (MCL 324.75106) contained a provision that would have repealed the designation in 2003. However, 2002 PA 3 eliminated the sunset, making Lake Hudson a permanent dark sky preserve.

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