



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 523 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Wayne Schmidt
Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism
House Committee: Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Date Completed: 6-9-16

RATIONALE

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act requires the Department of Natural Resources to establish a statewide network of trails that includes Pure Michigan Trails, Pure Michigan Water Trails, and other recreational use trails. Some of these trails were formerly used by Native Americans for transportation, trade, and warfare, and eventually formed some of Michigan's first highways. To promote the significance of these trails and Native American history, it has been suggested that the Department should recognize these places and work collaboratively with various stakeholders to preserve them.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 721 (Michigan Trailways) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:

- **Allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide signage and recognition of places significant to Native American history.**
- **Require the DNR to work with tribal governments, educators, the Department of Transportation, and other entities to implement a master plan to promote and preserve Native American history; assist and promote applications for inclusion in the National Register of Historical Places and for Michigan historical markers; and develop partnerships to seek funds for the protection, preservation, and promotion of Native American heritage.**
- **Require the DNR to report annually on its activities to the Governor and the Legislature.**

Specifically, the bill would allow the Department to provide signage and recognition of places significant to the history of Native Americans, including places significant to that history along trails in the Statewide Trail Network, as provided in Section 72117 (which the bill would add).

Section 72117 would require the DNR to work collaboratively with tribal governments, educators, universities, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, Travel Michigan, the State Historic Preservation Office, the State Archaeologist, the Michigan Historical Commission, historic preservation organizations, and historical societies to do all of the following:

- Review, plan, and implement a master plan to promote and preserve the history of Native Americans in the State.
- In conjunction with State and Federal authorities, sponsor commemorations, linkages, seminars, and public forums on Native American history in Michigan and neighboring states.
- Assist and promote the making of applications for inclusion in the National Register of Historical Places and for Michigan historical markers for places significant to the history of Native Americans in the State.

- Assist and develop partnerships to seek public and private funds to carry out activities to protect, preserve, and promote awareness of Native American cultural heritage in Michigan.
- Promote the signage and recognition of places significant to the history of Native Americans, including places significant to that history along the Statewide Trail Network.

The master plan would have to include a central compilation of information about places significant to Native American history in Michigan, and would have to provide for the dissemination of that information to the public through websites, brochures, or other means.

The bill also would require the DNR to issue an annual report to the Governor and both houses of the Legislature on its activities under Section 72117 in the prior calendar year.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 324.72114 et al.

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

It is important to promote and preserve Native American history, which is an essential aspect of Michigan's history. The trails that Native Americans used, including the St. Joseph Trail out of Detroit, and the Grand River Trail between Detroit and Grand Rapids, served as key routes for trade and warfare, and became the foundation for many Michigan highways. The bill would help ensure recognition of places that are significant to Native American heritage in the State, including places along the Statewide Trail Network. Under the bill, the DNR would be required to collaborate with other departments and agencies, as well as historical societies, to develop and implement a plan to preserve Native American history in the State. This would create a formal framework for protecting and recognizing Native American cultural heritage and history.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a minor, but negative fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources, and no fiscal impact on local units of government. The DNR would incur some costs associated with creating a master plan to promote and preserve the history of Native Americans, sponsoring events, and performing other promotional activities required under the bill. To the extent that the DNR already engages in these or similar activities, the costs could be mitigated. Additionally, the bill would require an annual report on the DNR's activities under the bill, which would create additional, likely minor, costs.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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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.