

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION: A SHAMBLES

The present outlook on environmental legislation is very grim. While citizens appear to have increased their concern over the need for more protection, the legislators appear to be hearing other voices.

For instance, NO good environmental legislation has been passed in Michigan in almost two years. While legislators, knowing constituents would be pleased, have thrown hundreds of bills in the hopper, none have been passed. Senator Hart's prediction that once industries knew the environmentalists could win there would be a strong lobbying-adverting backlash, has come true.

While the Michigan House of Representatives has passed good legislation, the Senate "is the gas chamber" in Representative Goemaere's words. In Congress, under the leadership of Senator Muskie, the U.S. Senate has passed good legislation but the Representatives in the House have been passing weakening legislation. The U.S. House just passed the "dirty water bill" - rejecting the "clean water package" of amendments. They have touted the fact that they authorized billions for sewage cleanup. This is meaningless until they also vote to appropriate the money. In any case, the bill effectively eliminates much of the progress to date. We will send you particulars on how your legislator voted, and what the bill is all about. It now goes to conference committee.

In Michigan only one environmental bill has passed - and that's a terrible one: the billboard bill. Watch to see how many billboards go down. Particulars later.

YOUR OPINIONS TO YOUR LEGISLATORS ARE NEEDED. ARE THEY HEARING FROM YOU?

SEE THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK ENCLOSED, AND USE IT. You can find your legislators' name listed in the book.

Write your Michigan legislators:

The Honorable -----  
State Capitol  
Lansing, Michigan 48901

MICHIGAN BILLS: BE A GOOD CITIZEN - SELECT AT LEAST ONE TO WRITE ABOUT

HB 4948. Inland Lakes and Streams Act.

This bill protects against unwarranted dredging and impounding of our waters from developers, property owners, etc.. Permits are required from the DNR before such use of the waters can take place. Bill was written after intensive work by many organizations.

Bill is still not through the House, though voting has started and things look favorable. The real struggle will be in the Senate. First, however, the bill is expected to go to the House Appropriations Committee, and if you live in a member's district, it is important to ask that they act on it swiftly. Members of the House Appropriations Committee are: Reps. Copeland (Chm), Jacobetti, Hellman, Huffman, Kehres, Kildee, Law, Nelson, Snyder, Stempien, R.A. Young, Farnsworth, DeStigter, Ford, Jowett, Roy Smith. (Incidentally, the drain commissioners are still fighting to be exempted (except for Kent County's Frank Bouma) as are soil conservation drain projects.

HB 4260. Air Pollution Bill

Would provide moneys from surveillance fees and require monitoring of all air pollution sources so we would KNOW what is being sent into the air. Also gets rid of old variance procedure, where the Air Pollution Commission can quietly continue to allow delays over periods of years. Instead requires more public procedure. Prevents different standards for different areas.

Now in Senate Committee, where very weakening amendments are expected. Write your opinion to your own state senator and to the Health, Social Services and Retirement Comm. Chairman, Alvin DeGrow. Speak to the issues noted above.

HB 4881. The Wilderness Bill

This calls for the establishment in Michigan of a system of wilderness, wild and natural areas and gives them protection.

- a) A board of seven knowledgeable citizens would be appointed to make recommendations to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- b) Within six months of the bill's passage, and each year thereafter, the DNR would be required to review lands and recommend areas for dedication by the Natural Resources Commission as wilderness, wild, or natural areas.  
NOTE: Areas, unfortunately, could nevertheless also be de-classified, an unfortunate part of the bill.
- c) Lands dedicated by the Natural Resources Commission would be administered to protect their natural values. For example, motorized vehicles, logging, and mineral extraction would be prohibited.

This bill remains in the Senate Conservation and Tourist Industry Committee, where it may be weakened or die. Write to Senator Gordon Rockwell, chairman, or your own legislator if he is on the committee (listed in handbook).

HB 5290. The Endangered Species Bill

This bill to amend the Game Law of 1929 prohibits the importation, buying, selling or offering for sale certain species of animals which appear on the Endangered Species List designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior, and certain additional animals set forth in the bill.

In the Senate Conservation and Tourist Industry Committee (see directions under Wilderness Bill).

HB 5000. Off-road Vehicle Bill

The House Committee on Conservation and Recreation want to know your opinion about the kinds of regulations you think ought to be made on all terrain vehicles, motorcycles, etc., which can go on land. Present proposed bill lumps motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (water and on land vehicles). All-Terrain vehicles pose a real threat to our marshes and streams, and dune buggies destroy sand dunes. Good legislation is possible if you flood both your Representatives and Senators with mail about how you feel.

HB 4893. The Falconry Bill

Would have permitted falconers to take hawks and owls in Michigan for falconry purposes. Supported by MUCC; opposed by our Council, Audubon Clubs, and Sierra Club. Senators got LOTS of opposing letters. Dead in Senate Conservation Committee.

U.S. Senate Bill (S.B. 1408)

Income Tax Deductions or How to Save Money while Engaging in Philanthropy

Now that we have your attention--this bit of information from the Grand Rapids : Audubon Club Caller of January, "72: Currently the U.S. Senate is considering a bill (S-1408) which would give a public charitable organization the right to communicate directly with national and state law-making bodies without jeopardizing its tax-exempt status. At present, tax-exempt organizations are not allowed to substantially help influence legislative proposals--which effectively prevented them from lobbying for or against pending legislation.

Undoubtedly a greater number of people would be willing to contribute more heavily to organizations (such as Audubon Club and WMEAC) if their gifts were tax-deductible. Let your United States senators know how you feel on this subject--Senate Bill S-1408. A bill is also proposed for the U.S. House of Representatives. So also write your U.S. representative in Congress in Washington, D.C.

POPULATION GROWTH: ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS FOR MICHIGAN

Conference: May 5 and 6, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.

The Michigan Population Council, Inc., is a tax-exempt corporation established in 1971. Its directors include both organizational representatives and individual citizens. To further its aim to increase understanding among business, government, industry and citizens regarding the impact of population growth on the state of Michigan, the council is sponsoring a major conference.

Aim of the conference is to present knowledge and experience regarding the inter-relationship of population growth and economic strength in Michigan. Topics to be covered by outstanding speakers are government, large-scale planning (urban, land use, transportation), business, natural resources, industry, education, labor and services (health, welfare, and municipal). For more information, call the Population Council at (313) 642-7410.

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