

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA



BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 415 (Substitute S-4 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Philip E. Hoffman
Committee: Hunting, Fishing and Forestry

Date Completed: 5-8-02

RATIONALE

The Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council involves adolescents throughout the State who participate in research, education, decision-making, and problem-solving on conservation issues that affect their community and environment. During the last several years, the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council has worked toward establishing a Statewide system of recreational water trailways throughout the State. The Council is interested in working with the Maritime Center at Western Michigan University, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries to designate certain water corridors on Michigan's lakes, rivers, and streams as Michigan heritage water trails, in order to increase public awareness of the historical and environmental value of Michigan's waterways. Thus, it has been suggested that the State should help to develop a program for recognizing significant water trails within Michigan.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 721 (Michigan Trailways) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Great Lakes Center for Maritime Studies at Western Michigan University, in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries, and the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council, to develop a Statewide recognition program to be known as the "Michigan Heritage Water Trail Program".

The program would have to be designed to do all of the following:

- Establish a method for designating significant water corridors in the State as Michigan heritage water trails.
- Provide recognition for the historical, cultural, and natural resource significance of Michigan heritage water trails.
- Establish methods for local governmental units to participate in programs that complemented the designation of Michigan heritage water trails.
- Assure that private property rights along Michigan heritage water trails were not disturbed or disrupted.

Within one year after the bill's effective date, the Center for Maritime Studies at Western Michigan University, in conjunction with the DNR, the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries, and the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council would have to submit a copy of the plan for the program to the standing committees of the Legislature with jurisdiction primarily pertaining to natural resources and the environment.

Proposed MCL 324.72113

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

Developing a heritage water trail program would provide an array of benefits for the citizens of Michigan and for tourists who visit the State. A heritage water trail system could create more appreciation and awareness of Michigan's water resources, promote tourism, enhance community appeal, and provide

historical and cultural information. As envisioned by the Michigan 4-H Youth Conservation Council, once significant water corridors were designated as heritage water trails, local communities then could promote the water trails to enhance tourism. Signs could be installed to identify the distinctive characteristics of each water trail, sometimes linking recreational or cultural features with a historical theme. The program also would ensure local input on the designation of a Michigan heritage water trail, and would require consideration of a water trail's impact on adjacent private property.

Legislative Analyst: Nobuko Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate impact on the expenditures of Western Michigan University, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries. There is no FY 2001-02 or FY 2002-03 appropriation, or recommended appropriation, for developing the plan that would be required by the bill.

Fiscal Analyst: Pam Graham

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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.