



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 744 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Patricia L. Birkholz
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 25 (Environmental Education) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the establishment of the Teacher Environmental and Conservation Honors (T.E.A.C.H.) program to recognize Michigan teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence in K-12 environmental education; and provide that an award could include a grant of up to \$5,000 for use in the implementation of environmental education projects.

The Coordinator of Environmental Education within the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) would have to establish and administer the T.E.A.C.H. award and the corresponding grant program. For fiscal years ending September 30, 2004, 2005, and 2006, \$50,000 from the Environmental Education Fund would have to be used each year for the grants.

Any person could nominate an eligible teacher for a T.E.A.C.H. award. "Eligible teacher" would mean an individual who taught environmental education to K-12 aged youth in a public or private school, or through a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. From among the T.E.A.C.H. award recipients, each year the Coordinator would have to select one to be honored as the State's "Environmental Education Teacher of the Year".

A T.E.A.C.H. award recipient also would be eligible for a grant to implement a specific environmental education project that focused on providing a learning experience for students to become better stewards of the State's natural resources. Environmental education projects in Great Lakes or water quality, land conservation, and air quality would have to be considered for grants. The maximum amount of a grant would be \$5,000, but award recipients would be eligible to receive more than one grant.

By October 31, 2005, the DEQ would have to submit to the Legislature a report that evaluated the T.E.A.C.H. award and grant program.

MCL 324.2505

Legislative Analyst: Claire Layman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would not increase or decrease revenue to the State, but would divert \$50,000 of annual revenue in the Environmental Education Fund to a new award program for three years. The Fund receives \$150,000 annually from selected civil fines and is used to operate a clearinghouse of environmental education materials and make them available to educators in the State.

Date Completed: 10-30-03

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels