



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 279 (Substitute S-2 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Patricia L. Birkholz
Committee: Health Policy

Date Completed: 3-28-07

RATIONALE

The poor health status of some Michigan residents is of concern to many. A leading cause of poor health is a lack of exercise. Reportedly, more than half of Michigan residents get less than 20 minutes of exercise three times per week. In an effort to promote better health and appreciation for Michigan's natural resources, it has been suggested that an award program be created to encourage people to engage in outdoor recreational activities.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 701 (Recreation and Cultural Arts) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in conjunction with the Department of Community Health (DCH), to create a "Michigan Get-Outdoors Fitness Award Program", within one year after the bill's effective date.

The Program would have to be designed to encourage youths and adults to participate in outdoor, resource-based activities that were physical in nature in order to become more physically fit and to discover Michigan's unique and diverse natural resources. The DNR would be the lead agency for the Program's development and implementation.

In creating the Program, the DNR and the DCH would have to do all of the following:

- Establish a system to recognize individuals who participated in outdoor,

resource-based activities, attained physical fitness goals while performing these activities, and excelled in the performance of these activities.

- Seek private-sector sponsors to fund the Program's implementation and provide recognition to these sponsors commensurate with their level of participation.
- Seek conservation, fitness, and recreation organizations, local units of government, and other interested persons to partner with in the administration of the Program.

The DNR could contract for implementation of the Program with one or more of the partners.

The DNR and the DCH could not incur costs in implementing the program in excess of the revenue received from sponsorships and partnerships. The Departments would have to publicize the Program broadly.

The DNR and the DCH annually would have to submit a joint report on the Program to the standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives with primary responsibility for natural resource issues and public health issues.

Proposed MCL 324.70107

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

Many people do not get as much exercise as they should, which can lead to numerous health problems. In light of the high cost to treat medical conditions that can be mitigated or prevented with healthy lifestyle choices, the State should take steps to promote the benefits of exercise. Michigan has many unique natural resources that provide opportunities for physical activity. The proposed Award Program would help foster appreciation for those natural resources and draw attention to the importance of exercise.

The DNR and the DCH would be responsible for designing the Program but possible awards could include, for example, certificates, patches, or perks funded by private sponsors, who would receive recognition for their involvement. These types of awards could be attractive to youths, in particular. Rewarding children for outdoor activity could divert them from television and video games, and help lead to a lifetime of physical fitness.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the State since all costs of the Program would be paid by private sponsorships and partnerships.

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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.