

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 150

Senator McBroom offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to oppose the designation of additional national
2 wilderness areas in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

3 Whereas, The National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS),
4 established under the Wilderness Act of 1964, is made up of more
5 than 800 national wilderness areas, which are defined as "areas of
6 undeveloped Federal land retaining their primeval character and
7 influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation."
8 National wilderness areas must be formally designated by Congress,
9 and are subject to specific management restrictions which generally
10 aim to preserve them in their natural condition; and

11 Whereas, Sixteen national wilderness areas have already been
12 designated in Michigan, including the Beaver Basin; Big Island
13 Lake; Delirium; Horseshoe Bay; Huron Islands; Isle Royale;

1 Mackinac; McCormick; Michigan Islands; Nordhouse Dunes; Rock River
2 Canyon; Round Island; Seney; Sleeping Bear Dunes; Sturgeon River
3 Gorge; and Sylvania wildernesses. These areas cover more than
4 294,000 acres of land throughout the state; and

5 Whereas, There is an effort underway to ask Congress to
6 designate four more national wilderness areas in the Ottawa
7 National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP), including the
8 Ehlco area; Trap Hills; Norwich Plains; and the Sturgeon River
9 Gorge Wilderness Addition. Together, these areas would add over
10 65,000 acres to the NWPS in Michigan; and

11 Whereas, In the Record of Decision for the 2006 Ottawa
12 National Forest Management Plan, the areas proposed for wilderness
13 designation were determined by the National Forest Service to lack
14 wilderness characteristics. In their decision, the Regional
15 Forester reported that the area had "no features or conditions that
16 warrant a recommendation for wilderness study" and has "low to
17 moderate wilderness potential"; and

18 Whereas, There is little evidence that designating additional
19 wilderness areas would result in improving the ecological health of
20 the Ottawa National Forest. Once wilderness restrictions go into
21 effect, opportunities to practice scientifically proven
22 silvicultural treatments, such as selective thinning, harvesting,
23 and planting; prescribed burning; and invasive species management,
24 are limited. These practices have been crucial in helping to
25 restore these areas to the quality they are today; and

26 Whereas, Potential economic development would be limited by
27 wilderness designation. Local communities currently benefit from
28 economic returns related to timber harvests and tourism in the
29 Ottawa National Forest. In 2016, the National Forest Service

1 reported that the Ottawa National Forest supported an estimated 960
2 jobs, which resulted in more than \$39.3 million of direct income to
3 local communities; and

4 Whereas, Recreational users currently enjoy a wide range of
5 activities in the Ottawa National Forest, such as hiking, wildlife
6 viewing, hunting and fishing, camping, motorized trail activities,
7 and boating. Wilderness designation would significantly limit
8 recreational access to these areas by prohibiting motorized
9 equipment and mechanical transport. Additionally, enforcing such
10 restrictions would increase the burden on entities charged with
11 managing those lands; now, therefore, be it

12 Resolved by the Senate, That we oppose the designation of
13 additional national wilderness areas in Michigan's Upper Peninsula;
14 and be it further

15 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
16 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United
17 States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan
18 congressional delegation.