

Reps. Kolb, Gielegheem, Minore, Zelenko, Jamnick, Brandenburg, Tobocman, Law, Dennis, Accavitti, Bieda, Condino, Farrah, Gillard, Gleason, Lipsey, McConico, Murphy, Sak and Vagnozzi offered the following resolution:

**House Resolution No. 52.**

A resolution to urge the Department of Natural Resources to increase its efforts to identify and designate natural areas under Part 351 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451.

Whereas, State government should be a leader in land stewardship and the protection of representative native, rare, and scenic habitats on state-owned land; and

Whereas, Many formally unprotected sites on state-owned land contain ecologically important, rare, or scenic habitats or are locales with special geologic, educational, or aesthetically valuable features. Many of these lands contain essential or imperiled plant and animal populations. These sites are irreplaceable components of Michigan's natural history; and

Whereas, Other states in the region are far ahead of Michigan in programs to safeguard significant natural areas; and

Whereas, In 1972, the Michigan Legislature enacted the Wilderness and Natural Areas Act. This legislation, which is now Part 351 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, sets forth a process for the Department of Natural Resources to identify and administer "wilderness areas, wild areas, and natural areas." The statute includes provisions that require the department to "enlist the voluntary cooperation and support of interested citizens and conservation groups"; and

Whereas, This legislation led to the dedication of 20 natural areas in its first 16 years. However, no natural area on state-owned land has been dedicated pursuant to the act since 1988; and

Whereas, A strategic plan for natural areas that included the stated mission "to identify, establish, maintain and administer a system of high quality, representative, and ecologically viable natural areas in Michigan" was adopted by the DNR in 2000; and

Whereas, At this time, 19 previously prepared nomination packages await a review and possible dedication; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Department of Natural Resources to review and process the backlog of nominated areas under the provisions of Part 351 of 1994 PA 451, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, and to seek appropriate public comment. We also call upon the Department of Natural Resources to seek nominations and solicit public comment on other areas on state-owned land that have especially important natural values, pursuant to the act; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Department of Natural Resources.