

Legislative Analysis



ALLOW DNR TO USE VOLUNTEERS

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House Bill 4111 as enacted

Public Act 65 of 2011

Sponsor: Rep. Bruce Rendon

House Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation

Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Complete to 3-23-18

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4111 AS ENACTED

The bill allows the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to appoint volunteers to help in carrying out department conservation responsibilities. Subject to the direction of the DNR, a volunteer may use equipment and machinery necessary for the volunteer service, including equipment and machinery to improve wildlife habitat on state game areas.

The bill amends Section 503 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), one of the sections that spell out the general powers and duties of the DNR. The section says, in part:

The department shall protect and conserve the natural resources of this state; provide and develop facilities for outdoor recreation; prevent the destruction of timber and other forest growth by fire or otherwise; promote the reforestation of forestlands belonging to the state; prevent and guard against the pollution of lakes and streams within the state and enforce all laws provided for that purpose with all authority granted by law; and foster and encourage the protecting and propagation of game and fish. The department has the power and jurisdiction over the management, control, and disposition of all land under the public domain, except for those lands under the public domain that are managed by other state agencies to carry out their assigned duties and responsibilities.

Section 83105 of NREPA (added by Public Act 418 of 1998) currently allows the use of volunteers to assist in forest recreation activities, and carries a prohibition on volunteers' carrying firearms and an immunity from civil liability for volunteers. That prohibition and that immunity were also included in HB 4111 as introduced but were removed by, respectively, House committee substitute H-1 and Senate substitute S-1.

MCL 324.503

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4111 would have no significant fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources.

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