



213 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
www.michiganlcv.org

**Testimony on SB 248**  
**Michigan House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation**

June 5, 2012

Dear Representatives,

The Michigan League of Conservation Voters opposes SB 248 because it implements a permanent cap on state land ownership throughout much of Michigan and requires legislative approval to remove the cap, rather than entrusting best land management practices to the Department of Natural Resources, free of political influence.

An arbitrary land cap is an imprecise way of addressing the various issues which have been raised as rationale for the necessity of this legislation. We agree, however, that a comprehensive land acquisition plan would benefit the management of state resources, and we support this committee's goal of achieving such a plan.

However, while this legislation has made real progress from its original version, there are still some troubling aspects to the substitute bills which have been proffered to date. Placing a permanent cap on Michigan's public lands would hinder the department's ability to strategically manage the state's resources, not improve it - especially in areas which lack abundant public land or where acquisition of inholdings within current state land areas could improve outdoor recreation opportunities, such as southern Michigan and the northern Lower Peninsula, respectively.

Requiring legislative approval of the department's land acquisition plan for removing the cap in these areas is also troubling. Legislative approval language could create undue political pressures on the department in the development of its plan, when it should be acting in the best interests of natural resources for present and future generations of Michigan citizens.

Substitute language describing the land acquisition plan has the makings of good policy, but there are troubling aspects within it, as well. Specifically, language finding that Michigan public lands are "subject to multiple uses, including motorized and non-motorized uses," is

problematic. Depending on how broadly it is interpreted, this language could hinder the department's ability to maintain non-motorized trails and pathways independent of noise and interference. We would like to see guarantees within the language that non-motorized pathways will be preserved.

To aid in the creation of a strategic land acquisition plan, Michigan LCV would not oppose an amendment which exempted the entire Lower Peninsula from a land cap requiring legislative removal. While we still do not agree with a permanent cap for the Upper Peninsula, we would not oppose a compromise which included an automatic sunset on any cap implemented for the Lower Peninsula and islands in between the Lower and Upper Peninsulas, in particular.

Absent approval of an amendment to exempt the Lower Peninsula from a permanent or legislatively-removed cap, Michigan LCV remains opposed the Land Cap Bill, SB 248.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew YoungeDyke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Drew" being more prominent.

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