



November 1, 2017

Dear Rep. Howell and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee. The Detroit Zoological Society is a world leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation. Additionally, the Detroit Zoological Society created the world's first institution devoted specifically to the conservation of amphibians, the National Amphibian Conservation Center. The Detroit Zoological Society (DZS) urges voting *against SB316*.

This bill would repeal MCL 324.45501 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. This section of Michigan's Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act sets minimal protections for wild frogs. Amphibian populations all over the globe are declining in the face of what is widely called the amphibian extinction crisis^{1,4}. Amphibian populations need protection in order to prevent irreversible population decreases.

The current MCL 324.45501 states that frogs cannot be hunted from November 16th through late spring. This protects frogs during their breeding cycle. Repeal of this section would allow hunting of frogs year-round, potentially resulting in devastation of Michigan's frog populations as a result of hunting of breeding adults. There is limited data on populations of Michigan's native frog species, and animals that are data deficient are often at a greater risk of population declines². Of the species of frogs and toads in Michigan, over half are in decline⁵. These animals need protection.

The current MCL 324.45501 also states that frogs may not be hunted of frogs with the use of a spear ("gigging") and an artificial light. Studies have shown that frogs feel pain, and that they feel pain differently than mammals^{3,6-7}. Death via spear in frogs is predicted to be slow and agonizing for these animals. While a frog may appear dead, it often takes many hours to die from a method such as spearing^{3,7}. Use of a light when gigging blinds the frogs and gives them little chance of escape. It is important that protections against this inhumane practice remain in place in Michigan state wildlife policy.

DZS feels strongly that SB316 would repeal protections for frogs, put in place by MCL 324.45501 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, which are necessary to protect populations of amphibians and to minimize suffering of frogs. We strongly urge our lawmakers to vote against this effort to strip protection of Michigan's wild amphibians.

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References:

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