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Senate Vote Guts the Endangered Species Act

Critical protections are rolled back for Michigan biodiversity

LANSING --- Today, State Senators passed the Biodiversity Act ([SB 0078](#)), limiting the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) ability to protect Michigan's natural resources and wildlife, and drastically redefining conservation efforts in Michigan. Sen. Tom Casperson (R - Escanaba) introduced the bill, and it passed with a 26-11 vote along party lines.

The Biodiversity Act prevents the DNR from acting under the Endangered Species Act or a number of other laws to promote and restore biodiversity on public lands. It jeopardizes almost \$22 million in federal funding for forest management and puts Michigan's sustainable forestry certificates that cover 3.9 million acres across the state at risk. This decision is a short-sighted approach that rejects science and sustainability. It makes it harder to ensure our forests, native plants and wildlife will be here for future generations.

"The DNR has considered biodiversity in its land management decisions for more than 100 years. Deciding it is no longer important is extremely disappointing. Supporters of this Act have defied sound scientific and land management principles, and put our invaluable natural resources in jeopardy. It's a loss for our environment and our economy," said Jack Schmitt, Political Director for Michigan League of Conservation Voters.

Sen. Rebekah Warren (D - Ann Arbor) offered a substitute bill with a practical solution that would have allowed the DNR to continue managing land based on science and sustainability, but it did not pass. "Michigan's biodiversity is a vital asset worth protecting. Today's vote disregards the environmental and economic importance of our natural resources and creates unnecessary obstacles to Michigan's conservation efforts," Warren said.

Biodiversity is the tenet behind successful efforts to restore Michigan's forests and moving wildlife off the Endangered Species List. For more information, visit the Michigan League of Conservation Voters [website](#).

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