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Michigan Wetlands Overhaul Moves to Senate Floor

Michigan LCV Says Bill Comes Up Short

LANSING --- The Michigan Senate Natural Resources Committee voted in favor of a bill that would overhaul Michigan's wetlands protections program today. Michigan LCV supports maintaining control over wetlands regulation at the state level, but says the bill does not adequately protect areas essential to Michigan's Great Lakes, rivers and streams. The legislation is sponsored by Senator Mike Green (R - Mayville) and passed with a (5 - 2) vote.

"The current legislation weakens critical protections for our wetlands while at the same time increasing departmental costs," said Senator Rebekah Warren (D - Ann Arbor). "I commend my colleagues for working to keep this program under state authority, but we must ensure that the regulations put in place will properly preserve our wetlands and waterways, which are essential to both the health of Michigan's natural resources and the strength of our economy."

As it stands, the bill weakens wetland protections in the state of Michigan. Originally intended to address deficiencies raised by the Environmental Protection Agency, the legislation now creates exemptions for development and activity within wetlands and reduces protections in a number of important ways. Michigan is one of two states that maintain control over wetlands protections, which is more reason to leverage our autonomy toward safeguarding them. This legislation comes on the heels of an open stakeholder process, but it puts Michigan's waterways at risk.

"We appreciate the DEQ's efforts to convene an inclusive stakeholder process and hear from all sides on this issue," said Jack Schmitt, Political Director for Michigan LCV. "But, if we truly want to protect Michigan's wetlands and take care of the clean, fresh water that drives our economy, we must see changes to this bill."

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