



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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SNAGGING FISH ON THE MUSKEGON RIVER

House Bill 4020 as introduced
First Analysis (5-15-89)

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Sponsor: Rep. Donald Van Singel
Committee: Tourism, Fisheries, & Wildlife
Michigan State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

In 1984, the Michigan Sports Fishing Law was amended to specifically allow the taking of coho (silver) salmon and chinook salmon by snagging the mouth or body of the fish. The provision applies from September 10 to October 25 in specific portions of certain rivers including portions of the Muskegon River in Newaygo County. During the late 1960s the Department of Natural Resources began to phase out snagging because there were complaint of snaggers trespassing on private property, littering, damaging river banks, and destroying the natural habitat of other fish and wildlife, and by the early 1980s special legislation was needed to allow snagging in specific areas. During the 1980s it was felt that snagging was appropriate for certain parts of the Muskegon River in Newaygo County because snagging could help reduce the numbers of surplus salmon in the river, and the recreational activity of snagging would help maintain economic stability in the area. However, the negative effects of the sport of snagging, including trespassing, littering and damage to river banks by snaggers, have begun to outweigh the benefits of snagging.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Sports Fishing Law to delete a provision allowing snagging of coho (silver) salmon and chinook salmon in the Muskegon River between Croton dam and the access site located at Pine Avenue in Newaygo County.

MCL 303.11

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Natural Resources, the bill would have negligible fiscal implications for the state. (5-15-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The problems resulting from snaggers faced by the residents of Newaygo County are typical of problems that other communities have when snagging is permitted. Snaggers not only trespass on and damage private property, litter public and private property, and disturb the natural habitat of other fish, but their noisy and concentrated activity can make it impossible for traditional sportfishing and commercial fishing to be enjoyed nearby. Since the impact of commercial and traditional sportfishing on local economies can be much more significant than that of snagging, and since the DNR is planning to increase the traditional fishery in the area of the Muskegon River affected by the bill, there are no compelling economic reasons for continuing to allow the practice of snagging.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (5-15-89)

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs supports the bill. (5-15-89)

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