SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

November 28, 2011

To: Representative Foster and members of the
House Natural Resources, Tourism
and Outdoor Recreation Committee

Sierra Club Opposes SB 248 (Casperson) – Cap on Land Acquisition for DNR

Dear Representative Foster and members of the House Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee,

We appreciate you taking time to consider our position on SB 248.

The Sierra Club urges you to vote NO on SB 248 (Casperson), a bill that would set a cap on the amount of land the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can own or manage in Michigan, even to achieve economic recovery, improve talent attraction and retention, boost tourism and recreation development, and protect natural resources.

It is important to oppose the bill in order to invest in the growing outdoor recreation sector of Michigan's economy. The state's travel and tourism economy generated $18.1 billion in travel expenditures and $874 million in taxes in 2009. The Senate Bill to cap the DNR's future land acquisition would weaken their ability to support the growth of Michigan's tourism economy. Michigan has a treasure in our miles of trails, streams, and state forests. These are the assets that can make us attractive to precisely the kinds of young professionals we want to build the state's future and restore our economic well-being.

Our Pure Michigan brand is based on our natural resources and the quality of life they provide. However, Senate Bill 248 undermines the DNR and its trained and dedicated staff who we entrust to manage our abundant land and water resources, to provide public access, and to deliver the Pure Michigan promise.

SB 248 fails to consider the interests of the Michigan citizens who value access to our state's natural resources or the benefits of state-owned land to local communities. Resource-based jobs, tourism, and limited need for local services are just a few examples of the benefits these lands provide.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote NO on SB 248.

Sincerely,

Mike Berkowitz
Chapter Organizer
Michigan Sierra Club

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