



National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

Midwest Regional Office
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Chicago, IL 60603

June 23, 2011

The Honorable Tom Casperson
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes
705 Farnum
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senator Casperson and other distinguished members of the Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes,

On behalf of our nearly 12,000 members in the Great Lakes State, the National Parks Conservation Association supports an adjustment to SB 470 so that Michigan's most special natural places – like Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore – remain adequately protected for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

As written, SB 470 would render many of the local zoning regulations that define where natural resource extraction can occur invalid unless it can be proven that such extraction would have "very serious consequences." Under such a scenario, highly valued natural amenities like state and national parks are left unprotected from the negative impacts inflicted by extractive industries choosing to locate directly adjacent to such properties. For example, gravel mining activities can degrade surrounding water and air quality, wildlife habitat, and scenic vistas. In turn, Michigan's tourism and outdoor recreation industries would suffer.

Unfortunately, the substitution in the companion bill to SB 470, HB 4746 – which the Michigan House passed yesterday – does not provide the language needed to responsibly safeguard the health of Michigan's land, water, and wildlife. That is why we support the following substitution, as put forward by the Michigan Municipal League and supported by the Michigan Township Association and the Michigan Environmental Council:

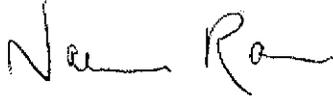
Amendment to Section 205 (MCL 125.3205)

(3) AN ORDINANCE SHALL NOT TOTALLY EXCLUDE THE EXTRACTION OF A VALUABLE NATURAL RESOURCES IN A LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT IF THE PROPERTY OWNER DEMONSTRATES THAT THERE IS A DEMONSTRATED AND UNMET NEED FOR THE SUCH EXTRACTION IN THE LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT OR THE SURROUNDING AREA, AND THAT THE PROPOSED EXTRACTIVE USE WOULD BE

REASONABLE CONSIDERING ALL OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS, INCLUDING THE MASTER PLAN OF THE LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT.

We appreciate your consideration of our request to support legislation that does not place one form of resource use over another and, consequently, allows Michigan citizens to play a meaningful role in determining the quality of life they seek to achieve.

Sincerely,



**Naureen Rana
Midwest Program Director
National Parks Conservation Association**