

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 876 (as introduced 11-2-99)
Sponsor: Senator Philip E. Hoffman
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 11-8-99

CONTENT

The bill would amend Chapter 88 of the Revised Judicature Act to include in the definition of "law enforcement officer" a State forest officer commissioned under Part 831 (State Forest Recreation) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act.

Chapter 88 of the Revised Judicature Act authorizes law enforcement officers to issue citations for civil infractions and defines "law enforcement officer" as a sheriff or deputy sheriff; an officer of the police department or the marshal of a city, village, or township; an officer of the Michigan State Police; a conservation officer; a motor carrier officer; a State security employee; a public safety officer employed by a university; a constable of a political subdivision, if authorized by its governing board; or a park and recreation officer.

MCL 600.8801

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would have a threefold, though indeterminate, fiscal impact on the State and local units of government.

Today there are approximately 100 forest officers throughout the State. These officers provide fire protection and general maintenance services within State forests. These officers also enforce State land use statutes and regulations issued by the Department of Natural Resources. However, because forest officers are not commissioned, they currently lack the authority to issue civil citations to individuals who violate those rules.

If this bill were approved, the Department anticipates that it would commission one to two forest officers from each of the 15 State forest management units. No new forest officers would be hired as a result of this bill. Commissioning officers would result in additional training costs to the Forest Resource division within the Department of Natural Resources; however, those training costs cannot be determined.

Second, this bill could reduce the law enforcement burden on local units of government that currently respond to forest officers' requests for assistance. Finally, revenues generated on tickets issued by commissioned forest officers for State civil infractions would be directed to support local libraries, unless otherwise directed by law. These revenues would vary based on the number and type of tickets written each year.

Fiscal Analyst: P. Alderfer

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