My name is Betsy Clark. I am a retired 25-year state worker, starting my career with Governor Milliken and ending it with Governor Granholm on the Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force (CWD). I worked for the DNR for 11 years and am a proud member of the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks. I submitted testimony to your committees on March 12 regarding the license proposal for State Parks and hopefully you have read it. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in writing since I cannot attend your hearing.

I represent senior citizens who love our state parks and all of the public lands conveyed to us by our forefathers. Every time I see the Pure Michigan commercials and once again see the beauty of our state, I am reminded of the tough decisions those who went before us made. Those folks had a vision…a vision of a state that in good times and tough times knew what was important.

A vision that regardless of the economy, wars, politics, public pressure or severe opposition, did the right thing and protected our public lands. A vision that many of us have yet to grab hold of and that is the importance of protecting those lands for generations to come. I like to say it is my legacy…protecting public lands for my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Unlike most on our Committee, I truly believe there is a possibility that if these bills fail to pass to provide adequate funding for state parks' infrastructure, we may be pressured into selling off state parks to provide money for infrastructure in the more popular state parks. Is that what you want your legacy to be in the future? A strip mall at Sterling State Park, the Detroit Riverfront back to its old rundown condition, condos where Traverse City State Park once stood? It's not what I want. I want future generations to know that even when the economy had soured and political pressure was intense, I stood up for what I believed was the right thing to do. Unlike development and building projects, land cannot be reproduced. Please support these bills. I ask each one of you to "opt in" to the future!

Thank you.

Betsy Clark
14576 Robson Road
Bath, MI 48808