

Senator Birkholz offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 205.

A resolution to urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the United States Forest Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture to use caution when considering proposals that would limit the amount of sustainably-managed forests in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Timber harvesting has a long and rich tradition in this state and is a key component of Michigan's economy and job creation. Michigan's 4-million-acre dedicated state forest system is the largest in the country. A large amount of this forest land is protected by designations, such as natural areas, state parks, wilderness areas, old growth, and other classifications. Each year, about 63,000 acres of the state's forests are actively managed for timber, producing an average of 12.5 cords per acre and providing over \$35 million to the state's forest development fund. Managed forests and the wood products industry support 150,000 jobs and \$12 billion in economic activity in Michigan; and

Whereas, The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) is considering the necessity of reducing the number of acres that can be harvested for timber in order to preserve species diversity. The DNRE is seeking recommendations of areas with high-quality native plant and animal communities for inclusion in a statewide network of Biodiversity Stewardship Areas. These areas may be off limits to timber harvesting; and

Whereas, Species diversity and timber harvesting are not mutually exclusive. There is little evidence to show that timber harvesting impacts species diversity. In fact, scientific studies have shown that unmanaged forest land can lead to declines in plant and animal species. Managed forests can supply both timber and enhanced wildlife habitat. Timber harvesting also provides for road access, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and many other recreational activities, which generate \$3 billion in tourism revenue; and

Whereas, Tax incentives that promote forestry and sustainable forest management are a better choice than limiting timber harvests. Incentives, such as those provided by the Commercial Forest Program or the Forest Legacy Program, can prevent the development or conversion of forest land into other uses that do not provide wildlife habitat. When forest land is converted into shopping malls or parking lots, wildlife habitat is lost forever. Clearly, the financial incentive approach can be an effective tool to protect threatened habitat and species throughout Michigan; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the United States Forest Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture to exercise extra diligence and explore all options in considering the proposal to create Biodiversity Stewardship Area designations in order to minimize the adverse impact on forest health and job loss in the state of Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the United States Forest Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture.