

Senator Casperson offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 179.

A resolution to oppose the current proposal to designate the northern long-eared bat as a threatened or endangered species.

Whereas, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed adding the northern long-eared bat to the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife. Northern long-eared bat populations have been severely impacted by the spread of white-nose syndrome in many areas of the country. The FWS currently intends to make a final listing decision by April 2015, including management measures to protect northern long-eared bats; and

Whereas, Current voluntary interim measures to protect northern long-eared bats, if adopted into law as mandatory measures, would be overly restrictive and would cripple the forest products industry in Michigan and nearby states. The restrictions would apply to public and private land and could shut down timber harvesting throughout the summer, devastating communities that rely on the industry for their livelihood; and

Whereas, The FWS has not engaged state natural resource agencies or the forest products industry in developing management measures to protect northern long-eared bats. State agencies, the forest industry, and others have invaluable expertise and experience that should be employed to develop reasonable and appropriate conservation measures that will protect northern long-eared bats while allowing for the proper management of other critical species and the sustainable harvest of timber; and

Whereas, Any required management measures must be based on sound scientific data. There is still great scientific uncertainty regarding the northern long-eared bat population and how white-nose syndrome kills bats. This information is critical in determining appropriate measures to protect northern long-eared bats. Any measures that would shut down timber harvesting must only be considered if there is conclusive science that these measures are critical to sustaining northern long-eared bat populations; and

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with natural resource departments in Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, has requested that the FWS delay its listing decision until such time when local studies are completed and data are recorded. This delay would allow more time to partner with these agencies and the forest products industry to evaluate the threat to northern long-eared bats and develop the best solutions to the problem; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we oppose the current proposal to designate the northern long-eared bat as a threatened or endangered species; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.