

Citizens must speak out against destructive wetlands bill

THE FEEDBACK FILE

I am writing on behalf of Detroit Audubon and its 6,000-plus members in southeast Michigan to urge readers to call their Michigan House representative today to oppose SB 1211, which we call “the wetlands destruction bill.” Time is of the essence as this bill has already passed the state Senate. We must make sure it does not pass the House.

Since the passage of the Goemaere-Anderson Wetlands Protection bill in 1979, wetlands over 5 acres in size have been protected in Michigan. Michigan was a pioneer in this endeavor and ever since has been considered a national leader in wetlands protection. This bill would only retain some protections for wetlands 10 acres in size or greater, thus removing protection for 70,000 wetlands covering more than a half million acres.

Michigan has already lost 50 percent of its wetlands, and southeast Michigan has lost 97 percent of its wetlands. Those last few remaining wetlands would be put in jeopardy. These are wetlands that provide important habitat for birds, fish, frogs, and other wildlife, filter out sediment and other pollutants, reduce flooding, help reduce greenhouse gasses, and are important groundwater recharge areas.

Farmers and others who want to alter a wetland, even drain it, and who can show that their project has a compelling benefit and there is no good alternative place for it to happen can obtain a permit to alter or even drain that wetland. If the permit is granted, the permittee must mitigate that wetland loss by creating a wetland of comparable quality and of equal or greater size.

Because Michigan has had stronger wetlands protection than under federal law, Michigan is only one of two states that has been given authority to issue both state and federal permits at the same time, saving time and money. That will likely be stripped away if this bill passes.

Let's not end Michigan's 40 years of environmental leadership on wetlands protection and throw away protection of half of our remaining wetlands. Those wetlands are part of our heritage as a Great Lakes state and a “water wonderland” which draws tourists from around the world. We are better than this!

James N. Bull

President, Detroit Audubon

This is Michigan, not Ohio

After reading Wednesday's sports I had to check to see that I had not awakened in Columbus, Ohio. The paper must have been 50 percent full of Urban Meyer-related stories. Enough already! It was decided months ago that this was to be his last season at OSU. Anything else is make-believe.

Larry Cronin

Troy

Time to end term limits

I think that there should be a movement to end term limits in the Michigan Legislature. Clearly, many of the public officials who put together these last-minute proposals that many Michigan residents are up in arms about don't have to worry about being replaced in the next voting cycle, and several among them have lucrative follow-up jobs already lined up.

If more politicians feared being replaced for proposing and enacting nakedly self-serving, reactionary policy, maybe they would think twice.

Christopher Currie

Detroit