

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 397 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Thaddeus G. McCotter
Senate Committee: Government Operations
House Committee: House Oversight and Operations
Date Completed: 7-29-02

PUBLIC ACT 162 of 2002**RATIONALE**

Through the years the State has adopted various objects, animals, and plants as official State symbols. In addition to the State flag, State seal, and State coat-of-arms, Michigan has an official State stone (Petoskey); flower (Apple Blossom); fish (Brook Trout); reptile (Painted Turtle); gem (Isle Royal Greenstone); soil (Kalkaska soil series); bird (Robin); tree (White Pine); and wildflower (Dwarf Lake Iris). It was pointed out that the State had not adopted a State fossil, though reportedly, approximately half of the other states have done so. It was suggested that the mastodon, which roamed Michigan 10,000 to 20,000 years ago according to the fossil record, be named the State fossil.

encourage science teachers to use the fossil as a teaching tool to encourage students to learn about prehistoric life.

Opposing Argument

Michigan has too many official State symbols already. While there does not seem to be any harm in adopting a State fossil, some have wondered how many symbols will be enough. Rather than drawing attention to something that is unique about the State, or that Michigan residents take pride in, the adoption of numerous State symbols may trivialize them all.

Legislative Analyst: George Towne

CONTENT

The bill created a new act to designate the mastodon (*Mammuth americanum*) as the official fossil of the State.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

State symbols should highlight wildlife and natural resources in the State, and should represent something special or unique about Michigan. The mastodon meets those criteria. Mastodons, similar in size and appearance to their distant relative, the elephant, became extinct around 10,000 years ago. In a site near Saline the world's only set of mastodon footprints was discovered a few years ago, and the remains of over 250 mastodons have been found in Michigan. By naming the mastodon the State fossil, the bill may

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