



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 5554 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Joe Hune
House Committee: Natural Resources, Great Lakes, Land Use, and Environment
Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 5-9-06

RATIONALE

As part of an environmental science course, students at Hartland High School have undertaken several activities aimed at protecting the environment and conserving energy. For example, the students have developed a program to recycle old batteries, cell phones, and printer cartridges, and have encouraged students and faculty to conserve energy by turning off lights when a room is not in use and shutting down computers at night and over the weekend. Evidently, the school has experienced reduced energy costs as a result of these efforts. It has been suggested that a "green schools" program be developed to encourage other schools to undertake similar activities.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 25 (Environmental Education) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow a public or private school in Michigan to apply to be designated as a "green school".

A county would have to designate a department of the county or the county's intermediate school district to accept and consider the approval of an application submitted by a school. A school would be eligible to receive a designation if it met 10 of the following criteria:

- The school recycles paper.
- The school reuses its magazines and newspapers for other projects.
- The school has adopted an endangered species animal from one of several

- organizations and posted a picture of it in a main traffic area.
- The school media center updates its print and nonprint ecological materials regularly.
- An energy savings program has been instituted at the school.
- Students participate in a planned program of energy savings, including dusting coils on cafeteria refrigerators, placing film on windows, setting hot water heaters one degree lower, seeing how plants and trees placed strategically can save energy, and checking proper inflation on bus tires and other school vehicles every month.
- The school has hosted a visit by an ecological spokesperson, a representative of the Sierra Club, an endangered animal species show, or a similar presentation.
- The school has a birdhouse habitat project.
- The school has established a natural Michigan garden project with native plants.
- The school has solar power presentations or experiments, such as a solar cookout.
- Classes do energy audits of their classrooms and make improvements, such as placing film on windows, caulking windows, or using kits to make windows more energy efficient.
- The school has a printer cartridge recycling program through which the school earns money by selling the cartridges to companies that buy them from schools.
- The school recycles batteries and has designated a representative to return them to an appropriate recycling program.

- The school recycles cellular telephones and receives money for them from recycling companies that work with schools.
- The school observes Earth Day in some way in April.
- Art classes have a poster contest to support ecology concerns and a schoolwide display in conjunction with Earth Day activities.
- The school has science class projects in which students do several home energy improvements, such as turning down hot water heaters, installing home window insulation kits, cleaning coils on home refrigerators, and installing draft guards for doors.
- The school has an ecology club whose activities include such activities as helping senior citizens make their homes more energy efficient, putting in new furnace filters, caulking windows, cleaning refrigerator coils in homes, and setting water heaters one degree lower.
- Classes visit internet sites where clicking saves rainforest habitat and teachers document the students' efforts.
- The school sets a goal of 5% less energy usage and works with local power utilities to make progress toward the goal.

Proposed MCL 324.2511

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

The implementation of "green" programs in schools can save money, help to create a culture of conservation within the schools, and enable students to educate others in their communities. The program was implemented at Hartland High School in response to concerns that rising energy costs were diverting money from other needs. By turning off computers, unplugging soda machines, and reusing paper, the school has experienced significant savings. Additionally, students work with their bus garage to ensure that the tires on school vehicles are inflated properly to maximize fuel efficiency, and educate younger children about Earth Day. The activities help teach students the benefits of environmental conservation and provide them with a working laboratory in which

they can experience first-hand what they are learning. The bill would promote the establishment of similar measures in other schools, which could help students develop an awareness of the importance of protecting the natural resources critical to making Michigan a desirable place to live and do business.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Koval

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco
David Zin

H0506\s5554a

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.