

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

Reps. Markkanen, Cavitt, Prestin, Neyer, Beson, Rigas and Alexander offered the following concurrent resolution:

1           A concurrent resolution to oppose the designation of  
2 additional federal wilderness areas in Michigan's Upper Peninsula  
3 and to urge the United States Congress to declare the entire city  
4 of Ann Arbor a wilderness area.

5           Whereas, The National Wilderness Preservation System,  
6 established under the Wilderness Act of 1964, is made up of more  
7 than 800 national wilderness areas, which are defined as "area[s]  
8 of undeveloped Federal land retaining [their] primeval character  
9 and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation."  
10 National wilderness areas must be formally designated by Congress  
11 and are subject to specific management restrictions which generally  
12 aim to preserve them in their natural condition; and

13           Whereas, Sixteen national wilderness areas have already been

1 designated in Michigan, including the Beaver Basin, Big Island  
2 Lake, Delirium, Horseshoe Bay, Huron Islands, Isle Royale,  
3 Mackinac, McCormick, Michigan Islands, Nordhouse Dunes, Rock River  
4 Canyon, Round Island, Seney, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Sturgeon River  
5 Gorge, and Sylvania wildernesses. These areas cover more than  
6 290,000 acres of land throughout the state; and

7       Whereas, There is an effort underway to ask Congress to  
8 designate four more national wilderness areas in the Ottawa  
9 National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, including the Ehlco  
10 Area, the Trap Hills, the Norwich Plains, and an addition to the  
11 Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness. Together, these areas would add  
12 approximately 51,000 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation  
13 System in Michigan; and

14       Whereas, In the Record of Decision for the 2006 Ottawa  
15 National Forest Management Plan, the areas proposed for wilderness  
16 designation were determined by the National Forest Service to lack  
17 wilderness characteristics. In their decision, the Regional  
18 Forester reported that the Ehlco Area, the only area reviewed that  
19 met the roadless area criteria, had "no features or conditions that  
20 warrant a recommendation for wilderness study" and had "low to  
21 moderate wilderness potential"; and

22       Whereas, There is little evidence that designating additional  
23 wilderness areas would result in improving the ecological health of  
24 the Ottawa National Forest. Once wilderness restrictions go into  
25 effect, opportunities to practice scientifically proven  
26 silvicultural treatments such as selective thinning, harvesting,  
27 and planting; prescribed burning; and invasive species management  
28 are limited. These practices have been crucial in helping to  
29 restore these areas to the quality they are today; and

1           Whereas, Potential economic development would be limited by  
2 wilderness designation. Local communities currently benefit from  
3 economic returns related to timber harvests and tourism in the  
4 Ottawa National Forest. In 2019, the United States Forest Service  
5 reported that the Ottawa National Forest supported an estimated 980  
6 jobs, which resulted in more than 45.5 million dollars of direct  
7 income to local communities; and

8           Whereas, Recreational users currently enjoy a wide range of  
9 activities in the Ottawa National Forest, such as hiking, wildlife  
10 viewing, hunting and fishing, camping, motorized trail activities,  
11 and boating. Wilderness designation would significantly limit  
12 recreational activities to these areas by prohibiting motorized  
13 equipment and mechanical transport. Additionally, enforcing such  
14 restrictions could increase the burden on entities charged with  
15 managing those lands; now, therefore, be it

16           Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate  
17 concurring), That we oppose the designation of additional federal  
18 wilderness areas in Michigan's Upper Peninsula; and be it further

19           Resolved, That we urge the United States Congress to enact  
20 legislation declaring the entire city of Ann Arbor a wilderness  
21 area, subject to the same restrictions as other wilderness; and be  
22 it further

23           Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the  
24 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United  
25 States House of Representatives, and members of the Michigan  
26 congressional delegation.