

**Public Policy Position
HR 0061**

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 216 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item.

The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On June 28, 2019, the Section adopted its position after a discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting. 6 members voted in favor of the Section's position on HR 0061, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 9 members did not vote.

Oppose

Explanation:

According to Michigan Audubon, the sandhill crane was hunted nearly to extinction in Michigan a century ago. Its recovery as a species is characterized as a conservation success story. <https://www.michiganaudubon.org/news-events/signature-events/cranefest/about-sandhill-cranes/>

HR 0061, which encourages the creation of a sandhill crane hunting season, cites the Michigan Breeding Waterfowl Survey data showing 48,900 sandhill cranes in 2016. However, the same survey shows a total of 115,000 sandhill cranes in 2015. This is either reflective of a precipitous drop in population or the difficulty in accurately determining the size of the sandhill crane population. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2017_sandhill_crane_status_554043_7.pdf While the stated purpose for the hunt is the need to control the crane population in order to protect corn crops, there are already legal hunting and permit measures in place to deal with cranes eating crops on a case-by-case basis. The creation of an annual hunt will not protect farmers' crops. A nonlethal, inexpensive crop treatment is available that deters cranes from eating young, sprouting corn, redirecting them to insects, which is a benefit to the farmers. There is no need to designate the sandhill crane as a game species and establish an annual hunt, which could again jeopardize this species' fragile comeback.

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