

Public Policy Position
SB 486

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 244 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 March 11, 2022, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 13 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 2 members did not vote.

Oppose

Explanation:

The Animal Law Section opposes SB 486, which would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (MCL § 24.43540e) to require that all members of the Wolf Management Advisory Council (the Council) be Upper Peninsula (U.P.) residents or, in the case of evidence of wolves present in the Lower Peninsula, that a majority of the Council be comprised of U.P. residents.

The Council is charged with “annually submit[ing] to the commission and to the legislature a report that makes nonbinding recommendations as to the proper management of wolves in this state.” To restrict the Council’s membership to residents of the U.P. would violate a key principle of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which provides that “[w]ildlife is a public resource. In the United States, wildlife is considered a public resource, independent of the land or water where wildlife may live.” (<https://fws.gov/initiative/wildlife-conservation>) Allowing wolf management recommendations to be made by residents of part of the state would disenfranchise a large segment of Michigan’s population, which also has a strong interest in how Michigan’s wildlife is managed.

In addition to violating the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, allowing U.P. residents to have a disproportionate representation on the Council is inconsistent with the purpose of the Wildlife Violator Compact, of which Michigan is a member. That statute provides that “[w]ildlife resources are managed in trust by the respective states for the benefit of all residents and visitors.” [MCL § 324.1615(a)(1)]

Allowing residents of just a portion of the state to make recommendations regarding the



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management of resources important to all Michigan residents would set a dangerous precedent that could have unintended consequences.

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