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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Senator Tom Casperson's bill to contain land purchases by our state. Every property owner knows that basic maintenance is the key to retaining value and safe use. Our state budget does not contain proper funding to both expand the amount of land we own and properly maintain what we currently own. Tough decisions must be made and I hope that we choose to maintain what we have rather than purchase more land that becomes unusable to do lack of funding for maintenance.

I equate our current policy of land purchases with my local slumlords philosophy, which is constant purchasing with very limited repairs and improvement always hoping that someone doesn't fall through that patched up porch. Michigan needs to spend more of its natural resource money on quality management and improvements to our current public lands rather than purchasing more. Our land is underutilized and mismanaged due to lack of funding and planning. We need to develop the land we own so that it can be utilized more effectively before we purchase more land. Land purchases should be reserved for years that we have extra funding or with grants.

We have many campgrounds without proper drives, bathrooms or campsites. We have closed lots of small primitive campgrounds in the last 5 years due to budget cuts and lack of funding to keep them open. This is a crime and causes many unintended consequences, poor people that prefer the cheaper camping are forced to pay more in the developed state parks, people that prefer rustic camping have been forced into developed campgrounds or out into the woods without any supervision or facilities. Since the closing of rustic campgrounds I have seen a large increase in campers just making their own camps in the forest in my area. When I ask most of these people will list rustic camps that have been closed that they used to camp in. We need to spend our money to maintain what we have and work to get back the camps and facilities that we did have before we purchase more land that we do not have money to maintain.

Please support Senator Tom Casperson in his endeavor to improve our forest maintenance and public access.

Sincerely yours,

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