



MICHIGAN CHAPTER

May 2, 2012

To: Senator Casperson and members of the
Senate Natural Resources, Environment
and Great Lakes Committee

Sierra Club Urges a NO vote on SB 1052 (Casperson) – Removal of Lakeshore Access and Wetland Protections

Dear Senator Casperson and members of the Senate Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes Committee,

We appreciate you taking time to consider our position on SB 1052.

The Sierra Club urges you to vote NO on SB 1052 (Casperson) because this bill says the DEQ may not interfere with the “right of riparian to mow, groom, remove vegetation, or otherwise maintain land above the water’s edge.” Scientific research shows that these activities have major impacts upon the health of coastal wetlands and the Great Lakes such as:

- Clearing vegetation through a coastal marsh changes the chemical and physical conditions of nearshore waters. These chemical and physical changes reduce or eliminate habitat for larval (young, immature) forms of important game fish including yellow perch, smallmouth bass, and largemouth bass. It has been shown that there are significantly lower numbers of adult fish, and fewer species of fish, near “groomed” beaches.
- Numbers of invertebrate animals (insects, snails, and other small organisms) upon which fish depend for food were greatly reduced by vegetation removal and beach grooming.
- After the removal of beds of bulrushes, the roots that normally hold sand in place rapidly break down, thus reducing the capacity for the vegetation to regenerate.
- Rapidly growing invasive plants that do not have the same ecological values are the first to colonize areas where native shoreline vegetation has been removed.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote NO on SB 1052. Votes pertaining to this bill will be included in the Sierra Club’s legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

Mike Berkowitz
Legislative Director
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter