



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY REMONUMENTATION

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Andrew Hartwick
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Re: SB 472 (Walker) Property; boundaries; state survey and remonumentation act; modify.

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee:

By way of introduction, I am Andrew Hartwick, GIS Director and Remonumentation Grant Administrator for Saint Joseph County. I was also a member of the Michigan Society of Professional Surveyors (MSPS) Working Group, which was established to re-open communications between the Office of Land Survey and Remonumentation (OLSR) and the county remonumentation officials. This letter is in support of SB 472 to modify the existing State Survey and Remonumentation Act.

SB 472 represents the confluence of ideas brought from more than 2 years of active, good faith discussions between the OLSR, the MSPS Working Group, and MSPS Legislative Committee. While some points of consternation were remedied through these discussions, some significant topics were unable to be resolved due to constraints and vague language placed within the current legislation.

While some argue that the reinstatement of the state survey and remonumentation commission will only add another bureaucratic level to the administration of the grant, I believe that this will encourage a statewide discussion about any potential changes made to the program. Currently changes to the program have been primarily created unilaterally, with the OLSR issuing memorandums to the counties mandating significant changes to long standing precedents. The reinstatement of the State Survey and Remonumentation Commission will allow for a discussion from a variety of professionals from all areas of the State to ensure that the changes are well vetted, necessary, and follow the intent of the legislation. It is not the intent of SB 472 to oversee the daily operations of the OLSR in regards to the Remonumentation Program, but rather facilitate open communications for all of the program's participants and resolve conflicts that arise within and between municipalities.

Furthermore SB 472 clearly defines what a "government corner" is and guidelines and procedures for identifying "property controlling corners". Some opponents of SB 472 state that these definitions will extend the timeframe and the funding needed to complete the program, but fail to point out that the overall number of corners were dramatically reduced in 2009 with Information Memorandum No. 15. This memorandum unilaterally redefined which corners were acceptable under the program and disregarded 17 years of prior precedent. In short, counties that had completed the majority of their corners were rewarded, while the counties that had not were penalized.

SB 472 includes the establishment and acquisition of high precision corner coordinates. As a mapping professional I believe that this is vital to a 21st century digital infrastructure. This will allow for better and higher quality GIS mapping of municipalities which will better serve the citizens of Michigan.

In conclusion I believe that SB 472 clarifies the existing State Survey and Remonumentation Act and allows for greater flexibility for counties to complete this vital work. The diversity of Michigan with regards to terrain and population has always posed a great challenge to create and implement programs that are equitable. SB 472 does not create a "one size fits all" program, but rather delivers statutory guidelines and methods for the remonumentation of corners that can be applied based on the specific needs of any given county. Due to this, I support SB 472 and encourage you to do the same.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Hartwick
GIS Director
Remonumentation Grant Administrator