



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore  
9922 Front St. (Hwy M-72)  
Empire, Michigan 49630-9797

IN REPLY REFER TO:

June 17, 2015

9.D.(SLBE)

Senator Darwin Booher  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

Dear Senator Booher:

As you requested in a recent telephone call, I am writing to provide a position on SB 91, the Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear fundraising license plate bill, which you authored. We believe enactment of this legislation would greatly benefit the resources and visitors of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (National Lakeshore) and we strongly support the bill.

The National Lakeshore encompasses over 71,000 acres, preserving outstanding natural features such as dunes, beaches, forests, and glacial landforms. It is not as well known that the lakeshore also has structures and landscapes that tell the stories of Michigan's American Indian, maritime, agricultural, and recreational history. Named "Most Beautiful Place in America" by ABC's Good Morning America in 2011, the National Lakeshore has set new visitation records since then, averaging over 1.4 million visitors per year. The annual economic benefit of the National Lakeshore to the local area is estimated at \$145 million.

We are fortunate to have enjoyed a formal partnership with the nonprofit partner Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear (Preserve) since 1999. The National Lakeshore relies on this partnership to help preserve the many historic structures and landscapes in the park, and provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and understand them. Preserve was the first to raise awareness about the potential loss of these resources and activated community support to begin the large-scale preservation efforts we have today. Preserve has successfully saved dozens of historic structures and landscapes through volunteer work projects, funding contractual work, and developing interpretive media for the public.

Enactment of SB 91 would provide greater recognition of the National Lakeshore as one of Michigan's premier tourist destinations. The timeliness of this bill could not be more perfect, as the National Park Service will enter its Centennial year in 2016, and is implementing a public awareness campaign that will invite new generations to visit and enjoy the parks, including the National Lakeshore. The funds raised through the license plate would help ensure that features that best tell the stories of Michigan's heritage will be preserved for all to experience and enjoy.

We are pleased to offer our strong support for SB 91. Please contact Deputy Superintendent Tom Ulrich at (231) 326-4703 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dusty Shultz  
Superintendent

cc: Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs Sally Durfee  
Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear Director Susan Pocklington