CONSERVATION UPDATE 2007

State Senator

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Dear Friend:

Surrounded by the largest surface freshwater system in the world - the Great Lakes - Michigan has a unique responsibility to conserve our natural resources. Senate Republicans have taken this responsibility to heart, working to protect our state's unique natural resources and meeting new challenges to our land and waters.

In the past few years, the Senate has authored ground-breaking legislation to regulate water withdrawal and map groundwater aquifers, restrict the flow of out-of-state waste, and ban the importation of invasive species. I hope you will take a moment to read about some recent legislation, along with information that may be of interest to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Cameron Brown
State Senator
16th District

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SENATE REPUBLICANS INTRODUCE

Michigan CONSERVATION Week

This spring ushers in a new celebration in Michigan - Conservation Week! This inaugural event, held April 22 through May 1, celebrates Michigan's conservation heritage and its role in maintaining and enhancing the natural resources of our state.

Michigan's resources include over 35,000 inland lakes and ponds, 49,000 miles of rivers and streams, and over 3,000 miles of Great Lakes coastline. Land resources range from fertile soils, to broad tracts of sand dunes to expansive forests and acres of timberland.

Wise management guided by a conservation ethic protects these cherished resources, and provides rich opportunities for the outdoor adventures we love - fishing, boating, hunting, hiking, skiing, bird watching, snowmobiling, nature photography and more.

Responsible conservation ensures that the natural beauty and quality of life we enjoy today in Michigan will be enjoyed by future generations as well. Now that's something to celebrate!

Did you know that hunters and anglers were among the earliest voices of the conservation movement? Learn about new legislation supporting Michigan's hunting and fishing heritage at **www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/conservation.**

Michigan Toll-Free Numbers:

Emerald Ash Borer Information	866-325-0023
Environmental Assistance Center	800-662-9278
Pollution Emergency Alert	800-292-4706
Radon Information	800-723-6642
Report All Poaching (RAP)	800-292-7800
Report Littering	800-44-TRASH

Law takes effect to control ANS

The number one environmental threat facing Michigan and the entire Great Lakes basin might surprise you. It is biological pollution in the form of aquatic nuisance species (ANS). More than 180 non-native pests, like zebra mussels and the round goby, have invaded our waters, mostly through the dumping of ballast water from ocean-going vessels. Once there, ANS disrupt native fish and habitat, harm water quality and recreation, and cost millions to control.

Michigan took the lead to regulate ballast water discharge with Senate legislation signed into law in 2005. The law, which took effect on January 1 of this year, requires all ocean going vessels to obtain a permit before entering Michigan ports. As a condition to receiving the permit, shippers have the right to enter Michigan ports, only if they agree to clean ballast water or agree not to discharge. Permits have already been issued to a number of foreign ocean-going vessels. However, other shipping interests have recently taken legal action to stop this law. We are following this issue closely.

In a related matter, the Senate is pressing for federal action to protect the Great Lakes from another potentially dangerous ANS invasion. Senate Resolution 15, adopted by the Senate on April 17, urges the completion of a permanent barrier to keep two species of Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. Asian carp are voracious feeders that compete with native fish and wildlife for food, and are a hazard to recreational boaters. At this time, a temporary barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is all that keeps them out of the Great Lakes.

Brown supports ban on phosphorus

Legislation to ban the sale of household dishwasher or washing machine detergents containing phosphorus in excess of 0.5 percent has passed the Senate. An overabundance of phosphorus encourages the excessive growth of algae and other plant species in water. If the amount of phosphorus is reduced, it could help improve water quality in the long term. Senate Bills 152 and 362 await action in the House.

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Senator Brown announces tree planting grants

Trees not only add beauty to our neighborhoods and communities, they help reduce carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Tree planting grants recently awarded in the 16th Senate District include:

- **City of Hillsdale - Arbor Day Mini-grant**
- **Village of Quincy - Arbor Day Mini-grant**
- **City of Hillsdale - Community Forestry Grant - $3,000**

Billboards limited under Senate Republican legislation

From the Lake Superior lakeshore to the rolling hills of southeast Michigan, our state boasts postcard-pretty scenery. Senate Republicans sponsored legislation, now enacted into law, that will help preserve the view from Michigan's highways.

The new law prohibits the Michigan Department of Transportation from issuing any new billboard permits. Among other provisions, it gives companies with an outstanding permit one year to either construct the billboard or turn in the permit. By capping the number of billboards, the new law helps preserve our state's scenic beauty for future generations.

Recycling -room to improve!

One of the best ways to conserve our natural resources and reduce waste is to recycle. Michigan lags behind other Great Lakes states in recycling rates. Why not make it a family project to recycle and reuse? Find out about your local recycling options at **www.michigan.gov/deqreswastecontacts**. I also have on hand a fun and educational activity book that parents and children can enjoy together. **Please contact my office to request a free copy of the Michigan Recycles! Coloring and Activity Book.**

Brown supports ban on mercury

Senate bills that ban the sale and use of certain household products containing mercury have recently been signed into law. Mercury is a dangerous chemical that has harmful, long-term effects. There are alternative products today that are much safer and also more environmentally friendly.

The centerpiece of the new law bans the sale and distribution of home thermostats containing mercury beginning January 1, 2009. Another provision bans the sale of blood pressure devices containing mercury beginning January 1, 2008, and bans their use altogether beginning January 1, 2009.

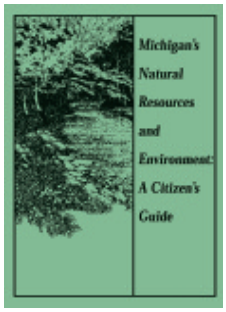
Senator Brown supports DNR gift cards

Looking for the perfect gift for your favorite outdoorsman or woman? Senate legislation introduced this spring may have the answer for you!

Senate Bill 338 would require the Department of Natural Resources to offer gift certificates redeemable for:

- Fishing and hunting license fees.
- State park motor vehicle permit and camping fees.
- Mooring fees.
- Off-road vehicle license fees.
- Snowmobile license fees.

What a great way to share outdoor Michigan with family and friends – in any season. The legislation has passed the Senate and awaits action in the House. You can track the bill at **www.legislature.mi.gov**.



Access *Michigan's Natural Resources and Environment: A Citizen's Guide*

Click on the book for information on the management of Michigan's abundant land and water resources and the state's efforts to protect and preserve those natural resources.