

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 372 (Substitute S-2 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Patricia L. Birkholz
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources, to administer an "Adopt-A-Watershed Program". The program would have to be directed primarily toward encouraging and facilitating the involvement of volunteer groups in protecting bodies of water through watershed-based cleanup, pollution prevention, and conservation activities; and assisting volunteer groups in selecting a specific watershed in which to conduct these activities. It also would have to include public informational activities.

The DEQ would have to administer the program in conjunction and cooperation with other State programs designed to protect water resources, and ensure that its scope did not overlap or conflict with other similar water quality programs the DEQ was administering. The DEQ could seek funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and other available funding sources.

The DEQ could enter into agreements with volunteer groups. An agreement would have to identify the watershed and describe the group's responsibilities; educational and promotional activities; environmental testing and monitoring activities in the watershed; and fund-raising. The DEQ could provide volunteer groups with funding; support personnel; environmental testing and monitoring equipment; signs identifying the watershed and the group; and training materials and other educational and promotional material.

The DEQ would have to give data information sheets to volunteer groups, and request them to record information such as the watershed's specific location; wildlife there; and the group's environmental testing and monitoring activities, and cleanup, pollution prevention, and conservation activities. The DEQ would have include this information in an annual report to the Governor, Senate, and House.

Proposed MCL 324.36001-324.36007

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would create a new program within the Department of Environmental Quality. While most of the work would be completed by volunteer groups, the DEQ would serve in an administrative role, which would require staff time and materials. The bill would permit the DEQ to provide funding, support personnel, equipment, signs, training, and educational materials for the program. No funding would be available unless an appropriation were made, and existing resources would have to be used for the other activities. The level of support services provided by the Department would depend upon the agreements between the DEQ and each volunteer group. The bill would permit the Department to seek funding from the Environmental Protection Agency or other sources for administration of the program.

Date Completed: 5-1-03

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels