



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bills 684 and 685 (as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Senator Rebekah Warren (S.B. 684)

Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (S.B. 685)

Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Date Completed: 11-2-16

RATIONALE

Through the years, the State of Michigan has named various objects, animals, and plants as official State symbols. In addition to the State flag, seal, and coat-of-arms, Michigan has adopted an official State stone (Petoskey); flower (Apple Blossom); fish (Brook Trout); reptile (Painted Turtle); gem (Isle Royal Greenstone); soil (Kalkaska soil series); bird (Robin); tree (White Pine); wildflower (Dwarf Lake Iris); and fossil (mastodon). It has been pointed out that, despite the importance of fruit to Michigan's economy, the State has not adopted a State fruit. Competing suggestions for that designation have included the cherry and the blueberry. Because of their respective significance to Michigan agriculture, it has been suggested that both be designated as State symbols.

CONTENT

Senate Bill 684 and Senate Bill 685 would create new acts to designate the cherry as the State's official State fruit, and the blueberry as the State's official State berry, respectively.

The bills are tie-barred, and each would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

State symbols should represent something important and unique or special about Michigan. The cherry and the blueberry meet those criteria. Michigan is the leading producer of tart cherries in the United States, providing approximately 70% to 76% of the nation's crop each year. Michigan ranks fourth in the production of sweet cherries, at around 20% of the U.S.'s annual crop. Blueberries also are an important crop for Michigan's economy. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2014, Michigan ranked first in the number of acres used for blueberry production, and second in terms of utilized production (the amount of the produced crop that is marketed, and either consumed domestically or exported).

The blueberry and the cherry are also important icons in Michigan. For over 90 years, the National Cherry Festival in Traverse City has drawn hundreds of thousands of people to the area each year to celebrate and promote cherries. The blueberry is celebrated at the National Blueberry Festival in South Haven. The festival has been held on the second weekend of August each year since 1963.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

FISCAL IMPACT

The bills would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

A1516\sb684a

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.