

Rep. LaSata offered the following concurrent resolution:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 21.

A concurrent resolution to encourage the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to support Michigan's water trails by advancing youth and safety programs, proposing sustainable funding, and intensifying investments in these programs in collaboration with public, private, and non-profit agencies and work entities.

Whereas, Paddling Michigan's waterways for recreation and other purposes has been a part of Michigan's long history. Paddle sports are one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in the nation, contributing more than \$140 million to Michigan's economy; and

Whereas, Michigan has over 4,700 miles of water trails, traversing Michigan's remote and natural areas as well as industrial and urban environments. These water trails exist along Michigan's Great Lakes coastline, connecting to water trails in other states and provinces throughout the Great Lakes basin as well as inland paddling routes. Water trails help support and promote environmental awareness and stewardship of Michigan's waterways and water quality; and

Whereas, By engaging youth in paddling on water trails, they overcome their fear of the water and develop a better understanding of how to swim and access the water safely; and

Whereas, Many youth lack access to water trails but programs exist in Michigan which engage youth in outdoor recreation and watersports. The Urban Youth Outdoor Kayak Explorer Program, a partnership between the Detroit Youth Connection and River Raisin National Battlefield Park, provides an opportunity for kids to learn about early American history, the environment, and how to kayak. In 2016, 1,359 youth participated in the program. In addition, a collaborative program of the Detroit Recreation Department and Riverside Kayak Connection offers youth kayak instruction as part of their swimming instruction program; and

Whereas, By engaging youth in the development of water trails, through employment and team-based training programs modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, they develop an understanding of the availability of water trails and learn green-collar job skills. The federally-funded AmeriCorps program partners with host agencies and entities to support the employment of young people at numerous locations throughout Michigan. Michigan hosts other Youth Conservation Corps programs, such as the one coordinated by SEEDS in Traverse City which has been recognized as a 21st Century Corps by the U.S. Department of the Interior. It empowers youth through labor-intensive conservation, invasive species removal, and stewardship projects on land owned and managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, local governments, and land conservancies; and

Whereas, Safety of users while on Michigan's water trails is of primary importance. Adequate funding is needed for marine patrol and other rescue agencies as well as water safety education programming and classes on the use of personal flotation devices and general paddle sports safety protocols. The availability of educational materials and programs at paddle sport rental venues is also vital so that people renting equipment have access to accurate information about boater safety. Public safety agencies, parks and recreation departments, local fitness organizations, manufacturers, and other non-profits who care about water safety and public access are all partners in these efforts; and

Whereas, Youth and safety programs are currently underfunded and largely dependent on federal funding or other unpredictable sources of grant funding. Such programs are also offered

inconsistently around the state and do not adequately serve public health and safety or water trail development goals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we encourage the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to support Michigan's water trails by advancing youth and safety programs, proposing sustainable funding mechanisms, and intensifying investments in these programs in collaboration with the public, private, and non-profit agencies and entities already involved in connecting youth to waterways, employing youth, coordinating invasive species management, and managing water safety and rescue efforts; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the members of the Natural Resources Commission.