Testimony Regarding SB 248

Submitted by the Michigan Association of Timbermen

At this point in time the Michigan Association of Timbermen (MAT) chooses to **remain neutral** on SB 248. We do appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony and regret that we are unable to appear in person today to address questions the committee may have.

In the"MAT Policy Positions" we express a concern about the amount of land, about one-third, that is owned by the State of Michigan and the Federal Government. We feel that future additional acquisitions should be offset by future divestures. We do recognize that the state has recently conducted a fairly intensive program of divesture of lands it considered to be unneeded surplus land. **However**, we do sense the fact that there may be privately held lands that possess certain characteristics that may better serve the people of Michigan if held under public ownership through fee simple purchases, easements or other conveyances of certain rights in property.

We express a concern about how the proposed SB 248 might infringe upon the rights of a private owner to voluntarily choose to enter into a land transaction with the state.

We would favor a provision in SB 248 that would permit the state to reserve certain rights in property when divesting of land.

We feel that in (5) (B) page 3 the term "trail" should be better defined. The language seems to imply that the word "trail" means a recreational use trail. We would suggest that "trail" should include other means of ingress and egress of a lower intensity of use than would be common to a "road" such as would be customary for timber and mineral extraction management activities.

We recommend that in (5) (C) page 3 the language be expanded to include lands that are enrolled in the Qualified Forest Program.

Perhaps one of our major apprehensions regarding SB 248 is: what might be some of the unintended consequences of the legislation. For example, might this bill if enacted, create barriers to being able to negotiate time sensitive land ownership transactions that might allow the state and private owners to more cost-efficiently manage their natural resource programs?