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January 17, 2014

Representative Andrea LaFontaine  
Chairwoman, House Natural Resources Committee  
N-796 House Office Building  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Andrea:

On behalf of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 5210 which approves the DNR-Managed Public Land Strategy and removes the land cap in northern Michigan.

It is well known that public land in northern Michigan is an asset that represents one of our most important economic drivers. There is no "Pure Michigan" without the DNR's public land base and especially DNR public access sites on our Great Lakes. Just this past December, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board approved funding for two significant state forest "in-holding" projects and a tremendous public access site to Grand Traverse Bay on Old Mission Peninsula. From trails and trout streams to Great Lakes access, these projects embody what "Pure Michigan" is all about.

These are not isolated examples in northern Michigan. We also know there are significant gaps to fill if Michigan is going to achieve the ambitious and laudable goal of becoming known nationally as the "Trail State" in the future. Quite frankly, we think it was wise for the legislature to push for the DNR to be more strategic about addressing gaps in the future, and we also believe that Director Keith Creagh and his team are on the right track. In fact, we are very proud to be a partner with our DNR and think the best is yet to come for our great state that is so fortunate to be endowed with natural resources that make us the envy of other Midwestern states.

We are also very proud of Representative Wayne Schmidt's leadership role in advancing this bill and his partnership with you focused on strengthening our state's economic future by investing in our world-class natural resources assets. From that lens, approval of this bill is imperative and urgent. It represents a key step so that we can get on to the important business of working together to protect and enhance Michigan's natural resources for the future.

Sincerely,



Glen A. Chown  
Executive Director

pc: Rep. Wayne Schmidt