

Educational Corner—Submitted by Mindy Koch **HOUSE BILLS 4073 AND 4421 OF 2025**

The following are excerpts from Greg Eagle’s written testimony to the Natural Resources and Tourism House Committee on September 24, 2025, and Bill Murphy’s commentary published in *Outdoor News*. Greg and Bill are members of the Michigan Resource Stewards and are retired Environmental Conservation Officers.

House Bills 4073 and 4421 would have a significant impact on natural resources and environmental protection law enforcement.

HB 4073 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to prohibit a DNR employee from entering private property without the owner’s permission or a warrant.

The bill “eliminates lawful authority that all enforcement officers have had for a century and severely weakens the State’s fundamental ability to protect the public trust. The State holds in trust the public’s ownership and wise use of the water, wildlife, and fisheries. These public resources are mobile and do not recognize man-made boundaries.”

“Requiring an officer to obtain a warrant for entry onto private lands for investigative purposes or response to a tip would virtually eliminate the ability of the State to protect public resources on the majority of Michigan’s lands.” “Seventy-eight percent of Michigan is privately owned. If the public’s resources could not be protected on these lands, the impact would be catastrophic.” Obtaining a search warrant requires an officer to document probable cause that a violation has occurred or is about to occur, which is an almost impossible threshold to reach when doing routine investigations.

HB 4421 would amend NREPA to prohibit an EGLE employee from entering private property during the course of their duties without a warrant or permission from the property owner or occupant.

EGLE oversees thousands of environmental permits. “Additionally, EGLE field employees must respond and investigate public complaints coming into the field offices as well as to the Pollution Emergency Alerting System which averages over 2,000 complaints per year.” Under HB 4421, the requirement to obtain a warrant or permission will reduce EGLE’s staff’s ability to investigate and follow up on environmental violations.

If the current system of inspection access that is dependent on voluntary compliance backed by a reasonable chance of being caught ceases to exist, it is improbable that industries and individuals will adhere to environmental regulations and permits designed to safeguard human health and natural resources for the long term.