

Michigan ROUNDUP

February 20, 1992

Legislative Week in Review

- Congressional action this week will protect almost one thousand miles of **Michigan waterways** under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Parts of fourteen state rivers, three in the Lower Peninsula, have been granted the permanent special conservation status previously carried by parts of only two state rivers: the Pere Marquette and the Au Sable. Additional stretches of the designated rivers, along with parts of three additional state waterways, are temporarily covered by the "wild and scenic" designation pending further federal review under the legislation sponsored by Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Flint).
- The Senate Appropriations Committee this week reported out four **veto restoration** bills totaling nearly \$11.5 million. This is an effort to revive negotiations with the House over SB 213, the original supplemental budget bill that never made it out of committee last year.
- Seventy-eight local **recreation bond** projects received the go-ahead from the Senate this week. SB 630 provides \$10.5 million in direct grants to local governments on a 75-25 percent matching basis and was passed without dissent.
- Two bills intended to mesh state statutes more closely with federal **firearm control** laws passed the House Tuesday. HBs 5400 and 5432 require certain felons to wait up to five years past their sentences before they could legally own firearms. The measures passed 102-0.
- Senate approval of a conference report on the so-called school **corporal punishment** bill (SB 338) sends the measure back to the House, where final approval is expected. The bill amends lawmakers' 1988 ban on teachers using physical force, clarifying when and how school employees or volunteers may restrain students.

Political News

- The **redistricting panel** appointed by the state supreme court has filed its plan to reapportion Michigan House of Representatives and Senate districts for the next decade. In rejecting both political parties' proposed district maps, the three-judge panel said that neither side adequately complied with such 1982 standards as geographical compactness. The panel stressed that neither partisan interests nor incumbency were factors in its plan, which now is before the supreme court for approval. Meantime, congressional redistricting still is being considered by the separate three-judge panel charged with deciding how to subtract the two congressional seats the state has lost due to population declines. That report is due next month.
- Governor John Engler outlined a \$5 billion **transportation plan** called "Build Michigan" on a three-city sweep through Mt. Clemens, Lansing, and Grand Rapids Wednesday. Almost \$4 billion of the total will come from federal funds and, in a decision tarred by critics, the governor's road plan will use bond funds rather than a gasoline tax increase to finance the state's share. Build Michigan will improve 7,000 miles of roads, rebuild 1,000 bridges, and provide an estimated 18,000 new jobs, Engler announced.
- The symbolic **capitol lawn tent city** erected by protesters may have expanded in violation of the group's permit, according to a *Lansing State Journal* report. The demonstrators' agreement with the Michigan Capitol Committee to limit their display—which protests budget cuts and homelessness—to three tents may have been violated by the addition of metal signposts, a covered generator, a commercial-size propane tank, and a portable toilet. The *Journal* reports that the attorney general's office has been asked to review the matter.
- The state's fifteen public colleges and universities are studying possible **tuition and fee hikes** in the face of proposed state funding that will not keep up with inflation. Last year state universities increased tuition by an average of 8.5 percent, reports the *Detroit Free Press*, noting that college trustees are waiting for the legislature's response to the governor's recommended budget before setting their rates for the next academic year.
- Governor Engler has followed up on his sharp campaign criticism of the glossy and slick **state publications** that characterized the agency reports of his predecessor. This year's executive budget booklet cost 84 cents each, compared with what the *State Journal* reports was a cost of \$4.44 each for the last budget document prepared by the Blanchard administration.