

# Proposed state land use bill under attack

By JACKIE KLEIN  
Those dismayed at a "watered down" version of a proposed state land use act are joining forces to lobby for stronger legislation.

Strategy was mapped at an emergency meeting in Southfield last week sponsored by the Detroit chapter of the NAACP, Detroit City Plan Commission staff, Interfaith Action Council of Metro Detroit, Michigan Catholic Conference, Michigan Committee on Law and Housing and Michigan League for Human Services.

"House Bill 5055, the proposed state land use act adopted by the House Towns and Counties Committee, has been weakened to the point where it is detrimental for social concerns and for metropolitan areas," according to a joint position statement of the organizations.

The bill, which has gone to the House Appropriations Committee, would:

- Establish a state land use commission within the Department of Natural Resources.
- Develop a state land use plan which is advisory except in designating critical land areas. The plan must incorporate local planning consistent with provisions of the act.
- Designate critical areas by the land use commission where development is to be restricted.

The original bill, introduced in 1972 by Rep. Philip Mastin (D-Hazel Park), would have placed the wealth of power to influence zoning decisions on large scale developments in the hands of the state land use commission.

The Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Townships Association lobbied against the bill, maintaining it would curtail the powers of local units of government.

"House Bill 5055 fails to control urban sprawl, stimulate development in urban centers, protect natural areas or prevent arbitrary zoning actions that exclude lower income housing in many communities," said Joe Guggenheim, executive director of the Michigan Committee on Law and Housing.

"It will reinforce fragmented local plans rather than provide stimulus for land use reform with a regional perspective. The proposed bill confines itself to protection of natural resources mostly in rural areas."

Amendments to the original bill, said Robert Hoffman of the Detroit City Plan Commission, give powers to the Department of Natural Resources, "the largest landowner in the state," weakening the position of the proposed land use commission.

Hoffman referred to House Bill 5055 as a "detrimental backward step to urban areas, making only a slight gain in environmental areas."

"Local jurisdictions are forced to compete for tax base and take a narrow ethnic view of urban concerns. If the Department of Natural Resources also ignores these concerns, we will have more industrial sprawl in the backyards and large scale developments encroaching on our environment."

Hoffman said the amendments proposed by endorers of land use reform won't take decisions away from municipalities. A state land use plan, he said, would establish policies and guidelines for localities with provisions for appeal.

"The conservative legislative committee endorsing Bill 5055 is wary of changing the balance of power."

Proposed amendments to the bill include promoting more intensive development of existing communities instead of allowing continued urban sprawl.

It is suggested that a state land use plan contain criteria for land required for recreation, industry, housing, transportation and other needs. This would assist municipalities make decisions on large scale developments.

Large scale developments of multi-jurisdictional impact should be under the control of the act and the state land use commission, according to advocates of a strengthened bill.

Another proposed amendment would require municipalities to recommend specific land areas that could be designated under a state plan instead of submitting local plans.

Amendments also call for a statement of environmental, social, public service and public facility impact for all large scale developments crossing jurisdictional lines and assurance of maximum public participation.

Representatives of some interest groups feel the proposed land use bill should be killed and emphasis should be placed on lobbying for a strong environmental protection act.

Others maintain the bill is a foot in the door and is better than nothing.

Groups favoring restoration of the original bill are preparing to line up endorsements for House floor consideration, enlist active support from Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, discuss their position with the Michigan Municipal League and make 15 minute lobbying visits to key legislators.

Attempts will be made to cultivate a bloc of urban liberal representatives to stimulate incorporation of the proposed amendments.

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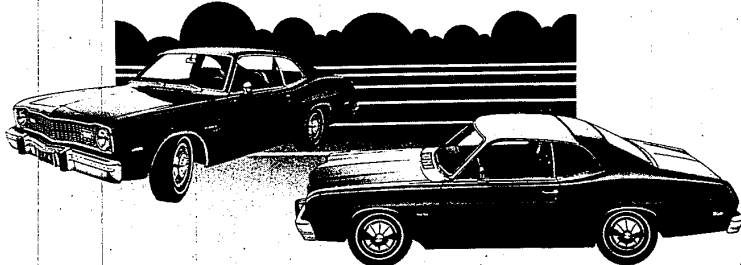
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### State approves 5 more CPAs

Five Observerland residents recently were granted CPA certificates by the Michigan State Board of Accountancy of the Department of Licensing and Regulation, Secretary Robert S. Davis has announced.

The certificates were issued after the individuals passed the uniform CPA examination which is given in all states.

They included Susan M. Haggerty, 20921 Mada, Southfield; Kenneth K. Heinzen, 1224 Risman Dr., Plymouth; Ernest G. Kelm Jr., 1560 Woodbourne, Westland; Bruce E. Neagley, 15141 Yale, Livonia; and Carl R. Smith, 20896 Boisford Dr., Farmington Hills.