

Bottle deposits

Petitioners seek unclaimed funds for conservation

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Michigan United Conservation Clubs will work harder than ever on its petition drive to let the state take unclaimed bottle deposits in the wake of legislative defeat of a competing bill.

"We're delighted with the outcome," said MUCC publicist Don Stypula after the House rejected a beverage industry-supported bill to split the unclaimed funds.

"We speculate their (industry) polling shows 80 percent support for our proposal," said Stypula, referring to a recent Livonia resident said the MUCC-led campaign has 22,000 counted petition signatures in its quest to get 192,000 signatures to put its proposal on the ballot.

THE HOUSE of Representatives last week voted 71-30 for HB 4704,

backed by the Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers.

This was 12 short of the three-fourths majority needed to amend a law enacted by voters — the 1978 deposit law for beer and pop bottles and cans.

MUCC led the campaign for that bill. (A later law included wine coolers.)

HB 4704 estimated that unclaimed deposits total about \$20 million and would split the money, now kept by wholesalers, this way: 60 percent for hazardous waste cleanup, 25 percent to be kept by retailers and 15 percent for alcohol abuse treatment.

MUCC estimated the available money is closer to \$40 million. Its position, intended for the 1990 ballot, would split half to hazardous waste cleanup and half to recycling.

HERE'S HOW area representatives voted on HB 4704:

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TAYLOR 946-9210
15100 Telegraph Rd.
HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 9:30-9; Sat. 9:30-6; Sun. 11-5

How to spend \$40 million in bottle money

Beer and Wine Wholesalers:

\$20 million to wholesalers
\$12 million to toxic cleanup
\$5 million to retailers
\$3 million to alcohol abuse
programs

Michigan United Conservation Corps:

\$20 million to hazardous
waste cleanup
\$20 million to solid waste
programs

was no need to continue the petition drive.

For copies of the petition form, he said voters should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Committee to Keep Michigan Clean, PO Box 30235, Lansing 48909.

The MUCC proposal, if adopted, would take effect Jan. 1, 1991. It would set up a Michigan Unclaimed Deposits Environmental Trust Fund within the state Treasury.

Other groups in the coalition are People in the Environment Group in Michigan, PUGIM, Sierra Club, Michigan Environmental Coalition, Michigan Interfaith Council on Alcohol Problems, Michigan Parks and Recreation Association, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts and the state Natural Resources Commission.

There was no floor debate on final passage.

The only argument was over a failed amendment to eliminate the postponed reconsideration. But it was unclear whether he will be able to muster the extra dozen votes he

needed this week.

IN THE HOUSE press room following the session, Stypula said some MUCC supporters had been misled by the Griffin bill into thinking, "OK, it's all over," and there

Landfill site: ski hill, golf course, park?

Look ahead 40 years into the future, to the year 2029. What will life in Oakland County be like? And what is going to become of all the trash we are burying?

The Oakland County committee in charge of finding a site for a landfill recently considered possible uses of closed landfill sites based on ideas from other parts of the country.

The committee discussed its ideas for landfill site uses after the landfills are filled and closed. However,

the shape of the landfill during operation can limit the options for end uses.

For example, a mound-shaped landfill cannot easily be converted into a golf course, but can make a good ski hill. The final shape of the landfill is determined by local geology and groundwater conditions and is therefore an important consideration in the siting process.

Ideas from committee members ranged from golf courses and other

recreational facilities, to light industrial parks in a campus-like setting. Committee members agreed, however, that no final decisions should be made now.

"THERE IS NOT an easy answer," said committee member Thomas Vukovich of Southfield. "I always thought of it (a closed landfill) in terms of a ski hill, golf course, or park. But with the rapid change in technology, what new processes will be available in 40 years?"

Sharon Foster of Oxford said, "I look 40 years back to 1949, and life was so different! It would be impossible to project what this landfill should be. It should be left up to the township that gets the landfill," she added.

The landfill site advisory committee meets the second and fourth Thursdays at the Oakland County Courthouse Cafeteria in the basement of the Courthouse at 1200 N. Telegraph Road in Pontiac.

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