

STATE SENATOR • LIZ BRATER • 18TH DISTRICT

# Brater Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-2406 • Fax: 517-373-5679  
E-mail: senlbrater@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.mi.gov/brater



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 22, 2008

Contact: Sen Liz Brater  
Phone: (517) 373-2406

## **Brater Bill to Keep Phosphorus Out of Michigan Water Approved by House Committee on Great Lakes & Environment**

*Legislation reduces phosphorus in dishwashing detergents, protects Michigan waterways*

LANSING- Sen. Liz Brater's (D-Ann Arbor) bill to protect Michigan water by reducing phosphorus in dishwashing detergents was passed by the House Committee on Great Lakes and Environment yesterday. Senate Bill 152 now moves to the full House of Representatives for a vote, where bipartisan approval is expected. The Senate voted unanimously to pass the bill in April 2007.

"Limiting the use of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent is an easy and effective way to prevent phosphorus pollution in Michigan's waterways," said Sen. Brater. "When we began to control phosphorus levels in laundry detergents, we saw phosphorus pollution reduced more than 70% in many of our southern Michigan rivers. It's time to apply those same controls to dishwashing detergents if we want to protect our water resources."

Sen. Brater's legislation would require dishwashing liquids sold in Michigan to contain no more than 0.5% of phosphorus by weight, which is the same limitation placed on laundry detergents in 1977. Most dishwashing detergents contain 6 to 8% phosphorus. In accordance with the bill, detergent manufacturers would have to reduce the phosphorus content of their products by July 1, 2010.

Phosphorus acts as a fertilizer when it reaches lakes, rivers, and streams. It can cause algae blooms, reduce oxygen to plants and animals, and ultimately accelerate the death of fish and other organisms that live in the water. Phosphorus is estimated to be responsible for up to 10% of algae in Michigan waters, and nearly destroyed Lake Erie in the 1960's and 1970's.

Rep. Marie Donigan (D-Royal Oak) proposed similar legislation to regulate phosphorus and protect Michigan's water resources.

"We must do everything we can to protect our water by keeping excess phosphorus from fueling the overgrowth of algae," said Rep. Donigan. "Limiting the amount of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent is a simple step that will help protect the health of our water. Thousands of jobs depend on us taking action now to stop the damage being done to our lakes, rivers and streams."

Wastewater treatment plants are not efficient in removing phosphorus, and it is much more economical to remove it from the source as opposed to removing it after the fact. Phosphorus gets into water bodies through dish and laundry detergents, agricultural applications, residential fertilizer, sewage and other avenues.

Legislation to reduce phosphorus in detergents is supported by the Michigan Environmental Council, Department of Environmental Quality, Proctor and Gamble, Soap and Detergent Association, Alticor, Michigan Manufacturers Association, Sierra Club, and Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

# # #