ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION

BILL NO. 54-26

INTRODUCED BY: Kelley

SECONDED BY: Prusik

A RESOLUTION TO: Support the advancements of agricultural practices in the Lake Erie Basin

THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACT:

WHEREAS, Record setting algal blooms and “Dead Zones” have been seen in Lake Erie in the years 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017. In August 2014, the Lake Erie drinking water supply of Toledo, Ohio became undrinkable. Over 400,000 people were forced to depend on bottled water, for three days. The water was poisoned to a degree where even boiling it wasn’t sufficient. “The state of Michigan is designating its section of Lake Erie as an impaired waterway because of damage to fish and other wildlife caused by harmful algal blooms”: and,

WHEREAS, The size and expanse of the algal blooms cannot be understated. The “Dead Zones” which follow, are extremely harmful. Dead Zones are areas of a lake in which the levels of dissolved oxygen have become dangerously low or completely depleted. This is caused by dying algae, which consumes oxygen as it sinks and decomposes. Evidently this is catastrophic for fish, other aquatic organisms, and even non-aquatic organisms: and,

WHEREAS, The culprit in all of this is phosphorus. The element aids in the growth of algae, and increases the rate of eutrophication: and,

WHEREAS, This pollutant, phosphorus, is from a nonpoint source polluter; agricultural farms in the Lake Erie Basin. “...long-term trends in agricultural practices are consistent with increasing phosphorus loading to the western basin of the lake...” Phosphorus is common in fertilizers, which are needed for the heavy corn production of the region. Water runoff from farms enters various waterways which drain into Lake Erie, transporting phosphorus with it: and,

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WHEREAS, Although the farming industry has negative impacts on surrounding water bodies, they are important feeding the community and as an economic bolster. American farms are critical for the nation. They benefit families, local economies, and international trade: and,

WHEREAS, A solution is possible without hurting America’s farms or farmers. “The Ohio Phosphorus Task Force in 2013 concluded that a 40 percent reduction in all phosphorus that currently ends up in western Lake Erie is required to curtail the problem.” Consequently, farms, nutrient service providers, and other groups have been taking action. “The Nature Conservancy and other partners, has developed a voluntary, third-party certification program to encourage best practices for fertilizer applications...Nutrient service providers throughout the Lake Erie watershed in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana have been signing up for this program, known as the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification, at a steady pace.”: and,

RESOLVED, ASMSU acknowledges that Michigan has a large role to play in cleaning up Lake Erie, and advancing more sustainable agricultural practices, while at the same time keeping American farms productive and strong. We support local, state, and federal legislation in advancing sustainable agricultural practices in order to be good stewards of Lake Erie.

RESOLVED, ASMSU promotes and will further efforts, in research and advancements of agricultural practices, in relation to Lake Erie, within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and other Colleges, where applicable, at Michigan State University.

INTRODUCED ON Jan.25.2018

REFERRED TO Policy COMMITTEE ON Jan.25.2018

SPECIAL ACTION TAKEN Sent GA DATE Feb.01.2018

COMMITTEE ACTION X Passed FAILED Voice-Majority DATE Jan.25.2018

FINAL ACTION TAKEN X Passed FAILED Voice-Majority DATE Feb.7.2018

PRESIDENT VPFA

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